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ABSTRACT

This book, intended for use with secondary and college students, presents a Middle Eastern view of the Middle East and the world. Most of the material in the book has been written by Middle Easterners, and it comes from a variety of sources including autobiographies, fiction, poetry, newspaper and magazine articles, letters, diaries, anthropological studies, and historical documents. There are two major parts. Part I, "Tradition and Change," focuses on the most important aspects of life in the Middle East: the birth of a child, the process of educating the young, the system of marriage, and the role of women. The material has been chosen to reflect both a traditional and a modern view of these issues. The last third of Part I concentrates on Islam, both as a set of religious beliefs and as a force in the daily lives of the people. One selection portrays a modern Middle Eastern family similar in many ways to an American family. Part II, "Past Glories, Future Hopes," begins with an examination of European control in the Middle East during the first half of the 20th century, including a glimpse of early resistance to that control. It then moves back in time and looks at the Arab Golden Age and the Ottoman Empire. The revolutionary movements and the thrust into world prominence are examined. A detailed examination of Israel is included. (Author/RM)

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Through
Middle Eastern
Eyes

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LEON E. CLARK, General Editor

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A CITE BOOK
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To the people of Afghanistan, and to Robert L. Steiner, the first director of the Peace Corps in Afghanistan, for helping me to begin the process of seeing through another's eyes.

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Foreword

PEOPLE—AND NATIONS—have a tendency to look at the outside world from their own perspectives. This is natural and perhaps necessary, for we are all prisoners of a particular space and time. But how limited and boring a single perspective can be! And how faulty and biased our information would be if we listened only to ourselves!

The main goal of THROUGH MIDDLE EASTERN EYES is to broaden our perspective by presenting a Middle Eastern view of the Middle East and the world. Most of the material in this book has been written by Middle Easterners, and it comes from a variety of sources: autobiographies, fiction, poetry, newspaper and magazine articles, letters, diaries, anthropological studies, and historical documents.

Unlike most books about "other peoples," THROUGH MIDDLE EASTERN EYES does not try to *explain* the Middle East but endeavors to *show* it; it does not offer "expert" analysis by outside observers but, rather, attempts to re-create the reality of everyday life as experienced by Middle Easterners themselves. Interpretation is left to the reader. In effect, THROUGH MIDDLE EASTERN EYES has two objectives: to let Middle Easterners speak for themselves, and to let readers think for themselves.

Part I, "Tradition and Change," focuses on the most intimate aspects of life in the Middle East: the birth of a child, the process of educating the young (both in and out of school), the system of marriage, and the role of women. The material has been chosen to reflect both a traditional and a modern view of these issues. The goal throughout is to balance the old and the new, the persistent and the changing. Life is never made up of only one or the other, and the Middle East today demonstrates this fact very clearly.

The last third of Part I concentrates on Islam, both as a set of religious beliefs and as a force in the daily lives of the people. Again, tradition and change are evident here, with traditional values providing continuity with the past and newer attitudes reflecting adaptation to the modern world. The final selection in this Part portrays a modern Middle Eastern family, similar in many ways to an American family.

Part II, "Past Glories, Future Hopes," begins with an examination of European control in the Middle East during the first half of the twentieth century, including a glimpse of early resistance to that control. It then moves back in time and looks at the Arab Golden Age and the Ottoman Empire, a period of more than a thousand years during which Middle Eastern scholarship and military power played a major role in the world.

Many of the revolutionary movements in the Middle East, which finally expelled the Europeans in the 1950s and 1960s, derived their inspiration from those early days of glory, as do Middle Eastern leaders today, who often see oil wealth as a means of creating a new "golden age." Both the struggle for independence and the thrust into world prominence are examined here in the light of the past, as seen by Middle Easterners. In the process, the effects of oil on individual nations, such as Kuwait, and on the Middle East in general, especially in its international relations, are explored.

The volume concludes with a detailed examination of Israel: its birth as a nation, the origin of its people, its unique experiments in nation building, and its relationship to the other nations of the Middle East.

In some ways, the Middle East may seem different from the United States, as indeed it is. But in many more ways Middle Easterners as people are similar to people anywhere in the world. Human beings, no matter where they live, face the same basic needs: to eat, to work, to love, to play, to get along with their fellow men. Learning how Middle Easterners respond to these needs may teach us something useful for our own lives.

More important, getting to know Middle Easterners as people—sharing in their thoughts and feelings, their beliefs and aspirations—should help us to develop a sense of empathy, a feeling of identity, with human beings everywhere. In the end, we should know more about ourselves—indeed, we should have an expanded definition of who we are—because we will know more about the common humanity that all people share. Self-knowledge is the ultimate justification for studying about others.

LEON E. CLARK

Part I

Tradition and Change

Introduction

One hand alone
cannot applaud.
—Arab proverb

When they think of the Middle East, most Americans think of such things as oil and the energy crisis, the Arab-Israeli conflict, camels and the desert. We get these impressions from newspapers and television reports of events in the area that affect the United States, as well as from travelers' descriptions of things that seem exotic or different. But events that affect America and things that seem exotic to us may be only minor elements in the life of the average Middle Easterner. Events that are of major importance to him may not be reported in American newspapers and may not even be noticed or understood by an American traveler. It can be very misleading to look at someone else's life only in terms of things that are familiar to us. *Through Middle Eastern Eyes* attempts to provide another perspective, that of Middle Easterners themselves.

The very term "Middle East" is an example of the way in which Americans and Europeans—in fact, all peoples—have traditionally defined foreign cultures in terms of their own. The "Middle East" or the "Near East" is contrasted to the "Far East." But what are these areas east of? What are they far from or near to? They are east of England, and of course the "Far East" is farther from England than the "Near East" or "Middle East." The term "Middle East" dates from the colonial period, when the location of various countries was stated in terms of their distance from Great Britain, the "mother country," which in effect became the center of the globe. Of course, from the point of view of Middle Easterners, Britain and the United States would be located in the "Near West," and in fact Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia, the westernmost parts of the Arab world, are known in Arabic as the "Maghreb," or "the West."

The map on page 3 shows the Middle East as it is defined in this book. The area includes all of the predominantly Moslem countries between Morocco and Afghanistan plus Israel. Afghanistan is included as part of the Middle East rather than Asia because many of its people are Persian-speaking and because, in culture and physical type as well as language, the people of Afghanistan are close to those of Iran. Similarly, the North African countries are included in the Middle East because they are predominantly Moslem and Arabic-speaking and because culturally they are closer to the Middle East than to Africa.

There is, of course, no single "Middle Eastern" culture, just as there is no single "European" culture that characterizes all people who live in Europe. As is true of any generalized cultural group, the Middle East contains an enormous variety of subcultures, distinguished by particular sets of values and ways of life.

One of the many characteristics that may distinguish a subculture is religion. The three main religious groups in Middle East are Moslem, Christian and Jewish. Moslems p dominate in all countries except Israel, where Jews constit 85 percent of the population, and Lebanon, where Moslems a Christians are about equal in number. But there are some Moslems, Christians, and Jews in almost all Middle Eastern countries.

A wide variety of life-styles is also represented in the Middle East, including those of the desert-dwellers of the Sahara, of the mountaineer Berbers in North Africa, and of the cosmopolitan residents of Teheran, Istanbul, Tel Aviv, and Cairo.

Subcultural groups are sometimes marked by different physical types. Although most Middle Easterners are Caucasoids of a Mediterranean type who resemble Italians, there are also Mongoloids, such as the Hazaras in the mountains of Afghanistan, and Negroids, such as the black Arabs who live in parts of North Africa.

The Middle East is thus an extremely diverse and complex region. It is inhabited by more than 200 million people and has a written history that goes back more than five thousand years, to the Sumerians of the Tigris-Euphrates river valley in Iraq. But, for all its antiquity, the Middle East is closely related to the West today. It is the home of the three major Western religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—and is the source of many other commonplace things in the life of the West, such as the Arabic numerals used in our arithmetic.

The goal of this book is not to "cover" all the diversity of the Middle East but to spotlight certain values and patterns of life that are common to large numbers of people in the area and to bring them alive, where possible, in the words of Middle Easterners themselves. I have attempted to bring unity out of diversity by identifying themes shared by many peoples of the Middle East. What beliefs, religious and secular, link people from the different countries of the Middle East? In what ways are they similar in their world views, in their traditions, in the problems and changes they face? These are the kinds of questions I try to answer in *Through Middle Eastern Eyes.*

We shall begin in Part I by taking a look at traditions common throughout the Middle East, for if we are to understand how a culture is changing, we must understand what it is changing from. "Culture" here may be defined as the sum total of all the ways of believing and acting that characterize a particular group of people. It is essential to understand that a change in one part of a culture will bring about changes, sometimes unanticipated, in other parts of the culture, for a culture is an integrated whole, and everything in it is related to everything else. The introduction of technology, for example, in the form of bridges or trains brings about changes in the ways in which the people perceive time and work. If the bridges are metal, replacement parts must be ordered well in advance of breakage, for metal bridges cannot be repaired without parts produced in factories, as wooden bridges can. Thus, the maintainer of the bridge must have a future time

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orientation; he must anticipate his needs. The train that brings him the replacement parts also brings other commodities to his town or village, such as food. Some of this food may be perishable. The train must therefore leave on time and arrive on time if the food is not to spoil. And this fact forces people to come to the station on time so as not to miss the train. They cannot set out whenever they feel like it, as some have done in the past; they must keep to a schedule. They may even be forced to buy watches to make sure they get to the station on time and to learn to read so that they can read the timetable. It is thus impossible for a country to absorb a new technology without other, seemingly unrelated, changes taking place.

This Part starts with the birth of a baby and looks at the traditional family, especially at the way in which the family passes on traditional values to the young. When we think of the family, we generally think of what is called the *nuclear family*—mother, father, and children. In America today, grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins generally do not live in the same household as the nuclear family. When the children grow up and marry, the nuclear family is likely to get smaller rather than larger, for in our society grown children normally leave the household of their parents to set up their own nuclear families.

In the Middle East, however, the family is usually much larger, including grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins, and the wives and children of the married sons, all living in the same household or in close proximity. In addition, Moslem men sometimes have more than one wife; thus there may be more than one wife and set of children living together.

This larger family unit, called an *extended family*, is an extremely important group in the Middle East. One is born into the security of this large family and is always aware of his responsibilities to it. With so many "parents," "brothers," and "sisters," a person has a great many people to call upon in time of need. At the same time, he is expected to help others in his family. Thus his wishes must often be sacrificed to the welfare of the total group. For example, an older brother may have to forgo an education if there is no one else to run the family store.

The basic social and economic unit in the Middle East, then, is the extended family. However, extended families are parts of a larger whole—the tribe. Traditionally, the tribe and the extended families included in it demanded total allegiance of their members. Until recently, most Middle Easterners distrusted people outside their own family or tribe; they assumed that outsiders would look after their own family's or tribe's interests first. Now many Middle Easterners are beginning to think of themselves as members of a nation and thus are more willing to work for the benefit of someone they don't know.

After examining the family and the way in which it passes on the culture's traditions, we shall consider the Moslem religion, Islam, for it is impossible to separate the traditional values of the vast majority of Middle Easterners from the tenets of this religion. We shall approach Islam in the light of its effect on everyday life, to discover the ways in which religious beliefs traditionally have helped people to cope with their existence.

Today family life and traditional values are changing in the Middle East. Throughout Part I examples are given of these changes. We shall look at the establishment of secular schools, at the introduction of new technologies and their products, such as radios, at the developing generation gap between parents who have little formal education and their well-educated sons and daughters. Mothers who have always worn a veil in public places are confronted by daughters who not only refuse to cover their faces in the traditional way but insist on choosing their own husbands. For in the Middle East today the authority of the family is eroding, the way in which people learn is changing, and a reordering of loyalties is taking place. Traditionally, for example, a Middle Eastern boy or girl would marry his first cousin, and this marriage would help to strengthen the ties between the two families. In the modern Middle East, however, increasing numbers of young people are marrying outside their extended families. As a result, their first loyalty may no longer be to the extended family but may shift to the new family. With the erosion of loyalty to the extended family comes the possibility of loyalty to a greater entity, that of the nation. As the nation provides individual services the family once performed—employment, health care, and physical security—in return it expects loyalty to national goals. In this way, changes in one aspect of a culture—such as the education of the people—results in changes in institutions like the family and in the system of loyalties within the culture.

In the selections that follow, you will be introduced to some of the traditional institutions and beliefs in the Middle East as well as to changes occuring in these institutions. As you read, you may wish to compare the traditions and changes in the Middle East and America. In what ways do traditions in these areas differ? In what ways are they similar? Are the changes taking place in these two parts of the world making their cultures more similar or less?

The Importance of Children

A house without a child in it
is like a room in darkness.
—Arab proverb

Editor's Introduction: Although families differ a great deal in structure from country to country around the world, they all must serve the functions of caring for children and teaching them the values of the society into which they were born. Children are important in all cultures; they are especially valued in the Middle East. An American traveling in the Middle East notes at once how children are fondled and made to feel part of the family, although they are also disciplined firmly when necessary.

There are many reasons why children have come to be valued so highly. Until very recently in most parts of the Middle East, and even today in some, health conditions were very poor, and many children died before they reached the age of four years. In the past, most people were farmers, and large numbers of children, especially boys, were needed to labor on the farm. Because a couple could not be certain how many of their children would survive to adulthood to work the fields and ultimately support their parents in old age, large families were a form of insurance, not only preferred but necessary. It was believed that "each baby brought his own resources into the world with him"—that is, that the world would somehow accommodate all the children born into it. For these reasons, the birth of a child was and continues to be a very important event in the Middle East, and a woman's failure to bear children is grounds for divorce.

Adapted from Yusuf Sharouni, "The Man and the Farm," in *Modern Arabic Short Stories*, selected and translated by Denys Johnson-Davis. © Oxford University Press 1967. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

Among traditional families in the Moslem Middle East, it is customary for cousins to marry and for the bride to move into the household of her husband's family. It is often said that the bride therefore needs children, to replace the family she has left. The Egyptian short story that follows describes a married couple who are modern in that they live by themselves, apart from their families, and yet also traditional, for the husband and wife are cousins, and they wish to start a family as soon as possible after marriage. In what other ways is Badawi a traditional man? In what other ways is he modern? How has Badawi worked out a balance between his modern self and his traditional self? What does

Children in the Middle East feel the security of a large, closely knit extended family. This Libyan family adds a European chocolate bar to the traditional tea ceremony.

Badawi's wife, Munira, do when the doctors do not seem able to help her to have children? What is the significance of her action?

BADAWI AND MUNIRA were no newlyweds: they had been married for seven long years without having either sons or daughters and during these years they had come to feel that their marriage was like a barren fruit tree.

Badawi was a farmer or, to put it more exactly, the owner of a market garden near the city of Cairo. On marrying he had left the market garden to his brother and had settled with his bride in one of the suburbs of the capital. Though Munira was his cousin, she had spent her life in the city. Quite possibly she herself would not have objected to living in the country, but Badawi, ever watchful for her comfort, had moved to a small modern home. His share of the work consisted of looking after the transportation of the produce and selling it by auction to the traders in the city markets; from time to time he also advised his brother about a certain crop so that it could be sold out of season at double the price. Badawi's spare-time hobby was reading papers, magazines, and an occasional book, for he had the opportunity of studying up to secondary-school level and had also learned how to wear a European-type suit. His brother's education, on the other hand, did not extend beyond the village school, and he continued to wear a *galabia* [a long robe traditionally worn by Egyptians].

One month of their marriage passed, then another. They wanted to have a baby. The earth had taught Badawi that he should wait, that he should allow time after sowing and watering for it to produce the first small, green shoots.

But after a while they began to be disturbed. Badawi did not wish to upset his bride, though he knew she was in fact already worried and that her mother . . . had also begun to share their concern. Their need for a child was an instinctive one, the need for the next step after marriage. Each began wondering: Is there something the matter that we can't have children? A year passed, a second year began.

It is not, however, in the make-up of a farmer to resign himself to the infertility of his land. The soil of the farm which

Badawi and his brother now cultivated had been regarded as barren more than fifty years ago. His grandfather, buying it for next to nothing, had begun to till it, at first planting it with rice, then with beans. Then his father had taken over and had treated it with chemical fertilizers until he managed to make it yield a fine crop of vegetables both summer and winter.

When no children came Badawi and his wife came to have experience of doctors as they went from clinic to clinic, from laboratory to laboratory, being examined and analyzed. They came to know other childless couples entering a world of doctors. At these clinics and laboratories they were told that they should be able to have children, yet somehow no plant grew. And so they gave up medicine, more uncertain than ever what the matter was.

Badawi wanted to have a son of his own, a small branch that would grow from his own branch; he wanted to enjoy seeing his own features coming to life in the growing child. He wanted him to be sturdy, intelligent, and full of energy, like his father. Badawi felt that he was like the branch of a tree and that he did not want this tree to be cut down; he wanted it to be handed on after his death in the same way as he had taken it over from those before him.

Two years passed, and his mother-in-law insisted more and more that medicine was nothing but humbug and robbery. Otherwise why did they not have children when neither of them was in any way to blame? Despite the fact that Badawi had studied up to secondary-school level, despite his reading of the magazine *The Doctor* and his being well aware that it was chemical fertilizers which gave life to the land, not charms or magic, in moments of despair he still fell back on a childhood filled with superstition. So he left the whole thing to his mother and mother-in-law. The two of them agreed that evil spirits must be the cause.

And so it was that their home was thoroughly cleaned, sprinkled with sand, and decorated with roses and other flowers; at the same time a bottle of rosewater and several pounds of sweets were thrown out on the ground. Incense was burned, drums were beaten, and no one was allowed inside. These rites were carried out for twenty-four hours. The old woman who had been called in to supervise also ordered that a sheep be slaughtered and that by dawn no single piece of it should be left; every scrap of meat had to be eaten before midnight and the bones buried before daybreak.

Badawi and his wife were told to wait for a month for the results. The month passed, and there was indeed a pregnancy. The trouble was, though, that it wasn't Munira who became pregnant but her mother, who was nearly forty-five years old and whose youngest child was ten. It was said that the spirits must have lost their way.

This disaster had a bad effect on Badawi and his wife. Having previously tried scientific methods with scientific calm, they now took to superstitious methods. As for Munira, she felt real jealousy of her mother. It was as though she faced one of Fate's puzzles: Why should it give something to someone who didn't want it while denying it to someone who did?

An atmosphere of tragedy settled on the house. The hot weather had ruined the tomato crop for which Badawi had had high hopes. Though Munira was in no way responsible for this, her husband became quick tempered and rude to her. At her wit's end, she would burst into tears and say: "I know the reason, it's because I haven't given you children. You know it's not my fault, though!" to which he would reply furiously: "Well, it certainly isn't mine." But before long, little by little, his heart would relent and he would wipe away her tears.

The previous summer Badawi's mother had died at the farm. On the night of the funeral, after the flood of crying had died down, Munira learned from the women who came to pay their condolences that a strange Bedouin [nomad] woman had arrived at the village three days earlier and claimed to have the power of finding lost things, curing the sick, and helping women to have children. Though Munira's faith in such matters had lessened since she had given gifts to the spirits, she was like a drowning person grasping at any straw. On the following day, therefore, she sent for the Bedouin woman and told her of the thing she wanted. The woman asked for a piece of gold jewelry and said she would return it at dawn the following morning. She also gave Munira two small rolls of wool, telling her to place one of them on her stomach till morning and promising that, with the help of God the One, she would become pregnant.

In her hope Munira had given the Bedouin woman one of her gold bracelets—worth no less than twenty pounds *—and had then carried out her instructions to the letter. The next morning she had waited for the woman to return with her bracelet as promised. But the woman never came back, and on asking about her Munira was told that she had left the village the previous evening. Realizing that she had been cheated, Munira opened the two rolls of wool and found that one contained what looked like seeds together with some white powder, while in the other there was a piece of paper written on in such small and poor handwriting that she was only able to make out a few words, such as "At your service." Complaining about her bad luck more than the loss of the bracelet, Munira threw the lot away.

The days passed, and Munira returned to Cairo with her husband. On one of their nights together, outwardly laughing at her stupidity but with a sad heart, she told her husband of the story of the Bedouin woman. But despite this unfortunate experience, Munira believed she was pregnant. She waited a few days and then told her husband.

Badawi had toyed with the idea of divorce but had found it distasteful and had therefore rejected it. Munira was his cousin; he had grown accustomed to her and did not want to change. Besides, they loved one another, and just as the fault was not his, so, too, it was not hers. More than once he had been told that if he were to marry some other woman children would be born to him. More than once his friends had urged him to take a second wife.† This, too, he knew was impossible, for it would hurt Munira to her very depths. Moreover this would be a new thing in his family, neither his father, grandfather, nor—he had heard—his great-grandfather ever having taken more than one wife.

Badawi did not allow such ideas to take root in his mind but fought against them, putting them away from him in the

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* One pound is worth about $2.40.

† Under Moslem law a man is allowed four wives as long as he treats them equally.

belief—shared by his wife—that everything is determined by fate.

When his wife told him she was pregnant, hope sprang up within him. Eventually Munira confirmed the good news, for she and her mother had gone to a doctor who told her that this time she really was pregnant—after six years and three months of marriage. Badawi danced with joy. Now the barren land had been fertilized, just as his grandfather before him had made his land fruitful. Now it was up to him to guard it and care for it until its fruit was born, alive, warm, and real.

Arrangements for welcoming the baby were begun, and the two of them gave much thought to the question of a good name. Would it be a boy or a girl? Munira started to make baby clothes, a small mattress, a small pillow, a small blanket.

Badawi could not help but wonder if the Bedouin woman had been successful. Perhaps those two rolls of wool, with that white powder in one of them, had been responsible? After all, he was not the only man to whom such a thing had happened. It had, for instance, occurred in the case of the former *omda* [mayor] of their village after ten years of marriage, and to Sheikh * Maihoub after no less than twelve years.

• • •

He remembered the first night of the funeral when all the people had left and Munira, in the living room, had exhausted herself with crying. Now here she was, nine months later, in labor. Because this was his first experience with such matters, it was quite impossible for him to reveal his fear and his feeling of helplessness. Six hours passed, and the roosters had begun to call like *muezzins* † from the neighboring rooftops. He slipped into her room for a moment. The six years' struggle had become focused into these hours. He said a few tender words of encouragement before being ordered out by the doctor.

Badawi had the highest respect for the doctor, for his calmness, gentleness, and experience; he held in his hands the keys of life for Badawi's wife and child. Badawi was also

* A *sheikh* is a religious man who has memorized the Koran, the holy book of the Moslems.

† A *muezzin* is a man who calls the people to prayer from the tower of the mosque.

struck by the doctor's great kindness, and the money he would be getting seemed to Badawi quite inadequate for being kept up so late and for the care and attention he was giving. Furthermore, the doctor's cheerful manner and smiling face helped Badawi to feel confident.

The doctor talked to Badawi about his own two children, a boy and a girl. The girl, though the younger of the two, was the cleverer and was in a higher class than her brother. Badawi talked to the doctor about his farm, methods of fertilization, the seasons for the various vegetables, and the way prices rise and fall. The doctor spoke about the government hospitals, their lack of equipment, and about the poor shape they were in. Badawi told him about his long struggle to produce a child, about the doctors he had met and the facts he possessed about the pregnancy, as though wishing to make quite sure that it was genuine.

As a faint moon appeared in the east, they drank down a couple of cups of coffee. While the doctor reassured Badawi about his wife, the first light of dawn came, the first early morning breeze stirred. The doctor then went inside to see how things were progressing. A matter of minutes before sunrise Badawi heard the crying of his newborn child and was himself moved to silent tears.

Learning to Be a Man

☙*Editor's Introduction:* Badawi, in the last selection, is in some ways a modern man and in some ways a traditional man. He is in some respects a man of the future and in some a man of the past. His beliefs are in the process of change. Like most people, he is not always aware of why he believes as he does. Some things seem so right and "natural" to him that he does not think of questioning them; other things are confusing to him, and he is not sure what he thinks about them.

Traditionally in the Middle East, as is still true in many towns and villages there today, children and adults had fewer uncertainties about the world than Badawi does. They were born into a fairly closed society, in which almost everyone had the same basic values and was rarely exposed to different attitudes and beliefs. In such a society people know exactly what they believe, and children are exposed to a consistent set of answers to their questions about life.

In the selection that follows, an American anthropologist describes how a Turkish boy, Mahmud, born in a traditional village, learns the answers that his village has come to accept to the daily problems of living. It is a great honor for Mahmud to sit with his father and the other men of the village, and as long as he does not interrupt the adult conversation, he is allowed to stay.

How does Mahmud learn his values? How do you learn your values? Do you think Mahmud is unsure about who he is or about his place in the world? How do you think Mahmud will teach his children? How would the modern world of radio, television, newspapers, and travel interfere with this kind of teaching and learning?❧

From Joe E. Pierce, *Life in a Turkish Village* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964), pp. 22–23, 25.

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From the cradle, boys in the Middle East spend much time with their fathers, learning the traditional male role.

THE REMAINDER OF SUMMER passed and Mahmud stayed indoors more and more, as the houses, though unheated, were warmer than the cool fall air. As the winter came and the snow fell over the countryside, most of the outdoor activities of the village ceased. The days grew shorter, the wind colder, and the snow piled high around the village. On these cold nights it was the custom for all the men to come together in the house of the Muhtar [the chief of the village], and Mahmud looked forward to these evenings with a great deal of pleasure.

Each day, after having finished the evening meal, the old Muhtar's wife would put some small earthenware dishes or copper trays filled with nuts or chick-peas about the room, sometimes on small stands or sometimes on the floor, and the old man would build a warm fire in the fireplace. Soon after dark the men would begin to arrive by ones or twos and take their accustomed places in the men's room. This was the largest single room in the village and doubled as a guest house for visitors who came at nightfall and needed some place to sleep before going on their way the next day. It had been a long time since the room had been used for this purpose, however, because the nearby growing city had hotels, and most of the modern travelers stayed there. However, the room still served as a clearing house for all the village business, as well as a place for the men to pass the cold winter evenings in warm comfort.

The room was perhaps 30 by 15 feet in size, and along one side a shelf nearly 15 inches above the floor extended about two feet from the wall and covered the full 30 feet of the room's length. The old Muhtar sat near the center of the shelf, waiting for his guests to arrive. As the men came in, the oldest in the village would seat themselves in order of age on this raised projection, while the younger ones would sit cross-legged on the floor. No women were ever allowed to come into this room when the men were there. The Muhtar's wife had prepared everything ahead of time, and when additional things were occasionally needed during the evening, one of the boys would be sent out to fetch it. Opposite the long bench was a fireplace, slightly larger than those in the kitchens of the other village homes, in which a fire burned brightly, spreading heat throughout the room. The single electric bulb lighted the space dimly and so the shadows caused by the firelight were not prevented from dancing about the walls.

Mahmud would have been happier if the electric bulb had not been there at all, the way it used to be when he had been a very small boy. Electricity had been introduced to the village only a year ago, and he remembered the days when only the glow of the fire lighted these meetings.

As the gathering grew in size, Mahmud heard many small groups of men talking idly about all sorts of personal problems, but when nearly all of the villagers had arrived, they began to quiet down.

The Hoca [a religious leader] posed the first question. "Muhtar Bey, when will next year's money for the mosque be taken up?"

"Hocam, the amount has not been set yet," was the Muhtar's reply.

"All right, let's do it now," the Hoca persisted.

"Let's do it now," the Muhtar agreed.

And Mahmud listened as the Hoca told about the things the mosque would need during the coming year. Then several of the older men told how they had given so much the year before that it had been hard on their families, and finally, the Muhtar talked interminably about the duty of each Moslem to support the Faith and ended by asking the head of each family for just a little more than he knew they could pay.

Following this request there were a series of discussions between the Muhtar and each family head, haggling over what the members of his family could afford to give. Finally, however, agreement was reached with each man, and the Hoca knew how much he could count on for the coming year. The Muhtar would see that the money was collected and turned over to the Hoca.

The business of the evening being out of the way, Mahmud became more interested, as he knew that he liked most what was to come now. He had learned that he was too young to speak at the meetings, because he had been taken out several times the year before by one of the older boys and told that he could not stay with the men unless he could be quiet, so he waited in silence for what would happen next. After a slight pause one of the braver of the teen-aged boys called to an old man.

"*Dedem*, tell us some stories about the olden times."

"Shall I tell about the wars?" the old man nearest the Muhtar asked.

"Yes, about the great war with the Russians," the youth answered.

"Well, I was but a boy then, but my father went with the army of the Sultan that summer, and he told me this story."

> It was a great army, with the generals in front on horseback and all the men, thousands of men, walking behind. They left our village in the early spring, after the wheat had been planted, and marched against the Russians. With the Sultan leading them, the men walked unafraid as they met and defeated the Russians, killing twenty or

even fifty of them for each Turk who died. The Russians became very much afraid and started to run. They ran far back into Russia, and the Sultan's army followed them. They ran without stopping all the way to the edge of the Caspian Sea, but even running is very slow across the mountains, and by this time it was beginning to get cold. In those days the army did not take food with it as it does today, but ate off the land. The Russians had already eaten most of what was there before the Sultan's army arrived, and when the Turks came after them, there was nothing left. Knowing that he had completely beaten the Russians, the Sultan ordered his men to turn back toward home, and shortly after it began to snow and the wind blew, and it got colder and colder. As the Turkish army made its way over the cold barren wastes of Russia, there was no food at all, none. At night they slept on the cold ground, if they could sleep at all, and by day they suffered from hunger. The men had already eaten everything edible they carried. Finally, they were reduced to eating their shoes, belts, and other things that had any food value. When even this was gone, many starved to death. Of course a few had also been killed by the Russian soldiers. When they arrived back at our village, over half of the men were gone. My father said that he had walked the last few miles barefooted, because he had eaten his shoes along the way.

"Can one really eat his shoes, Grandfather?" one of the smaller boys asked.

"If you get hungry enough," the old man laughed.

"Tell us about the time Hoca borrowed the pans, Grandfather," one of the other young men asked.

"All right."

One day Nesreddin Hoca* wanted to make some *pilaf* [a rice dish] so he went to his neighbor and borrowed a pan. After making the *pilaf*, and waiting several days, he brought two pans back to the man.

Surprised to see an extra pan, the neighbor said, "Hoca Efendi, where did the second pan come from?"

"Efendi," replied the Hoca. "You are a lucky man, your pan had a baby."

The neighbor wondered about the Hoca, but since the old man was widely known for his foolishness, the man took the two pans and forgot the incident.

Some time later, Nesreddin Hoca came again to his neighbor's house, and this time he borrowed both pans at the same time. Many days passed, and when Hoca did not return the pans, the neighbor came to inquire about them.

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* A comical religious leader about whom stories are told all over the Middle East.

"Hoca Efendi, where are my pans you borrowed some days ago?"

"Oh, my friend, I have sad news for you."

"Oh? What is that?" the neighbor asked, a little puzzled.

"I am so sorry, but your pans have died," responded the Hoca.

"Died?" asked the neighbor.

"Yes, died," repeated the Hoca.

"But how can a pan die? Pans aren't alive," the neighbor protested strongly.

"They just died. You made no complaint when I told you that your pan had a baby. A pan that can have a baby can surely die," the Hoca said quite simply and turned and walked away leaving his neighbor puzzling over what had just happened. . . .

[Many more stories, most of them with a moral, were told until finally] one of the older boys came over to Mahmud, took him by the shoulder, and motioned for him to go out. They went into the kitchen together and prepared Turkish coffee. Whenever four or five cups of coffee were ready to go, Mahmud would take them on a tray and offer them first to the oldest man who had not been served, then, the next oldest, and so on, until finally all of the men had coffee. The rest of the evening was filled with friendly chatter, and the group broke up very late and went home, only to reassemble at the same time and place the following evening for another similar session, as these gatherings were nearly a nightly affair during the cold months of winter.

Traditional Girlhood

Editor's Introduction: As we saw in "Learning to Be a Man," boys learn what to believe and value by listening to their fathers and the other men of their village. Girls learn in similar ways. By listening to their mothers and by watching them and helping them, they learn the skills and values they will need when they get married and become mothers themselves.

The following selection demonstrates that young girls in the Middle East do a great deal of useful work around the house and in their village. Many Western psychologists feel that this kind of training is very good for young people, for it is important to feel useful and needed while one is growing up. Such children know who they are and what the world expects of them. In America, by contrast, many young children are never allowed to do anything truly useful and important until they reach adulthood.

The following selection is based on a study conducted in Palestine (present-day Israel) by a Danish anthropologist and published in 1950. Alya and Sitt Louisa are Arab women who explain to the anthropologist how young girls are brought up in the village. How would you describe the role of the traditional Arab girl? How does it compare to the role of an American girl?

FATME'S WORK

ALYA [MY ARAB woman friend] tells [me] about the daughter of [one] of our neighbors who might be about nine years old

From Hilma Granquist, *Birth and Childhood Among the Arabs* (Helsinki, Finland: Söderström and Co., 1950), pp. 138–39, 154–58, 165.

and was already betrothed to a cousin somewhat older. Alya calls her: attendant on her mother.

When the macaroni is made the mother says: "Fatme, give me the board; get me the rolling-pin, the cloth for putting the macaroni on" [the mother] then rolls out [the macaroni] and folds it up together; she cuts it and puts it on the straw tray. And . . . [when the water is] boiling—"Fatme, get the macaroni! Get the salt! Get the pan for oil and onions!"

A waitress for the mother. Fatme hands . . . [things] to her mother who says: "Give . . . [me] the spoons! Give . . . [me] the knife! Give me the ladle!" and . . . [Fatme] washes the spoons and the ladle and the wooden basin, etc. [The mother says]:

"Give . . . [me] the mattress, the cushions and the covering!"

"Open the door and shut the door!"

Fatme carries her brother, puts him to sleep in his cradle. Then she airs the bedclothes, then she sweeps. If the mother is absent, she looks after and plays with her little brother. When her mother comes back from Bethlehem, she tells her mother: "Look after my brother! I want to go and gather dung" [to burn for fuel].

[Later Fatme] is told: "Go and gather the little stones for the [bottom of the] baking-oven! Go to Kusta, the shopkeeper, and get [oil]!" Another time: "Get matches!" etc. [Fatme] does not ask anything for herself.

She gathers all the small wood for burning. She gathers all the dry dung from the terrace and puts it ready for burning in the oven. If her little brother is sleeping, she fetches water and gives water and food to the chickens. In the evening she closes the chicken-house.

She gathers the eggs. In the evening she is asked: "How many eggs didst thou gather?" She answers: "I gathered three or two." Sometimes there are none. . . .

And I have seen other girls do similar things. I have also seen the girls go to collect wood, and in the spring to help to gather grass and wild vegetables and also seen them in the fields. In short the work of a growing girl is a grown-up woman's work in miniature. . . .

At home a girl is chiefly educated by her mother, although the father may do his share. Alya says of mother and daughter:

"If [the mother] cannot govern her, she tells the father about it. The father says to his daughter: 'If thou dost not obey thy mother, I shall whip thee. And if thou dost not listen to her, I shall whip thee very much!' Then the girl is frightened, for the breasts of men have no milk—the men have no mercy."

Further, a brother has all his life to answer for his sister's behavior, even if she is married. He must . . . punish her when it is necessary.

The *fellaheen* [peasants] consider that training should begin in earliest youth, best of all in childhood.

One of the advantages of child marriages is said to be . . . that the mother-in-law is able to train her daughter-in-law while she is still very docile and that it can only be good for everyone concerned that the young woman as early as possible becomes accustomed to the atmosphere, the habits, and the way of working prevailing in the husband's home where she is to remain.

It is said that a woman has two kinds of education. She is educated in her own home and then in her husband's home. The sooner the latter begins, the better it is.

The following proverb illustrates the belief that training to be effective and to have permanent value must begin with the child:

> Teaching the grown-up is like writing in sand.
> Teaching the youth is like engraving in stone.

TRAINING FOR WORK

We have already seen that a girl by helping her mother in little ways gradually grows into the housework; but it also happens that the mother gives her daughter direct instructions.

Thus, according to Alya she says: "Come! I will teach thee to sew!"

Or the mother teaches her daughters to bake. I quote Alya:

"Sit near me when I knead and watch what I do! Just as I do, thou shalt do!" She gives her the last of the dough, or she

Learning by doing: this young Moroccan girl helps her mother and aunt with their sewing.

cuts a piece from the dough and the daughter throws it into the oven: one or two pieces. The girl, by copying her mother, learns how to do it."

The girls must also be present and help when the baking-oven is attended to, especially by fetching dung for fuel and the small stones which are placed on the bottom of the oven and on which the bread lies. The oven calls for much labor and great attention.

People say: "The oven is a lady and needs a slave." In accordance with this it is said that the oven orders her slave, the woman. . . .

The women themselves are interested in learning their work and doing it well. It spurs them on, too, when they know that they will be scolded if they are incompetent, and on the other hand that they will be praised if they are industrious and competent. They know the whole village hears about it.

People of the West [point to] the heavy burdens the women of the East must bear. It is true that the women in many cases do and must overstrain themselves. But think of the pressure and competition which prevail in the West! Think of the achievements in sports which require the exertion of every last bit of power, physical and mental. Then think of the women who come in from the wilderness carrying great bundles of wood on their heads knowing they are watched by all the people. What a triumph it is for them! The greater their burden, the greater the attention and praise they receive. The women are proud of being able to carry heavy burdens. They train themselves to be strong and competent. It makes them respected personally. They are conscious that everybody is watching them and expressing their opinions.

Strength is not the only thing necessary. They must also show that they have staying power. She who springs from one thing to another is blamed. She who sticks to her work until it is done is praised. For example: In the spring the women go out into the wilderness to gather green plants for food. As they always go together they watch each other, give each other advice and afterwards speak about it. . . .

As regards the young girls there is a special practical reason to watch and value their work, and the young girls themselves are eager to show what they can do.

Sitt Louisa: "People like to choose one who sticks to her work. These young girls, they are watched. Before people take a bride, they observe."

When considering a girl as a bride, industry and skill are highly valued. The proverb says with a certain humor:

> The one who picks the wheat
> and the one who picks out the lice
> and the sewing one,
> take her, even if ye have your eyes shut!

The Bard

Editor's Introduction: Another source of learning in the traditional Middle East was wandering minstrels, bards, and other entertainers, who served the same function that radio and television do today. They brought news from distant lands, told entertaining stories, and put on plays, wrestling matches, magic shows, and dances. Some of these performances and stories had a moral to them; others were just for fun. Although these traveling minstrels did not have a national audience, as radio and television performers do today, they were able to bring news from one area to another and to emphasize the values of the culture by means of moralistic tales of national heroes.

Royal proclamations were read, tales told, and plays acted in the town square or in local inns or cafés. The bards and minstrels were skilled professionals in the art of disseminating news or the history of a people This function was especially important at a time when the vast majority of the people were illiterate and had no other way of gaining information, and the stories of the bards provided an important link and sense of continuity with the past. The oral tradition remains important in the Middle East today. Men often gather around the radio or television at night and discuss the news. Poetry is much admired, and men sometimes sit at their homes or in the cafés reciting classical poetry or trying a hand at making up their own verses.

In the selection that follows, from an Egyptian novel, we see how the oral tradition is carried on in a new form. An old bard goes to a café where he has been reciting for many years. He is the last of his kind in Cairo. What is lost when the last bard is gone? What is gained through the development of radio and television?

Naguib Mahfouz, *Midaq Alley* (Beirut: Khayats, 1966), pp. 4–9.

A SENILE OLD man is now approaching the café. He is so old that the passing of time has left him with not a single sound limb. A boy leads him by his left hand and under his right arm he carries a two-stringed fiddle and a book. The old man greets all those present and makes his way to the couch in the middle of the room. He climbs up with the help of the boy, who sits beside him. He places the instrument and the book between them and looks hard into the faces of the men present, as though searching for their reaction to his coming there. His dull and inflamed eyes, filled with expectation and apprehension, settle on the café's young waiter, Sanker. Having sat patiently waiting for some time and having observed the youth's studied disregard for himself, he breaks his silence, saying thickly:

"Coffee, Sanker."

A bard in Afghanistan sings the glories of the past. The oral tradition is dying out in the Middle East and is being replaced by radio and television.

The youth faces slightly toward him and after a slight hesitation turns back on him again without saying a word, completely disregarding the request. The old man realizes the youth will go on ignoring him, and, indeed, he expects nothing more. Just then help comes, as though from the heavens, with the entry of someone who heard the old man's shout and saw the youth ignore him. The newcomer shouts . . . to the waiter:

"Bring the poet's coffee, lad!"

The old poet gazes gratefully at the newcomer and says, in a sad tone:

"Thanks be to God, Dr. Booshy."

The "doctor" greets him and sits down beside him. Dressed . . . in a cloak, a skullcap and wooden clogs, he is a dentist who learned his profession from . . . [experience] having had no medical or any other schooling. Booshy began his professional life as assistant to a dentist in the Jamaliya district. He learned by observing the dentist's skill and so became proficient himself. He was well known for the effectiveness of his prescriptions, although he generally preferred extraction as the best cure! His roving dental surgery would no doubt have been considered unbearably painful were it not for the fact that his fees were so low. He charged one piaster [a few pennies] for the poor and two for the rich. . . . He relied on God . . . to prevent . . . [too much] blood from flowing! Moreover, he had made a set of gold teeth for Kirsha, the café owner, for only two guineas [about $6]. In Midaq Alley and the surrounding area, he was addressed as "doctor."

Sanker brings the coffee for the poet, as the "doctor" requested. The old man raises the cup to his lips, blowing into it to cool the drink. He then sips it and continues to do so until it is finished. He places the cup to one side and only then recalls the ill-mannered behavior of the waiter towards him. Gazing at the youth with apparent disdain, he mutters indignantly:

"Ill-mannered fellow . . ."

He picks up his instrument and begins to pluck its strings, avoiding the angry looks Sanker gives him. He plays a few introductory notes just as the coffee-house has heard him play every evening for twenty years or more. His frail body sways in time with the music. Then he clears his throat, spits, and says: "In the name of God." Crying out in his harsh-sounding voice, he continues:

We are going to begin today by saying a prayer for the Prophet [Mohammed]. An Arab Prophet, the chosen son of the people of Adnan. Abu Saada, the Zanaty, says that . . ." He is interrupted by someone who enters at this point and says roughly:

"Shut up! Don't say a single word more!"

The old man lifts his failing eyes from his instrument and sees the sleepy, gloomy eyes of Kirsha, the tall, thin, darkfaced café owner looking down at him. He stares at him glumly and hesitates a moment as though unable to believe his ears. Trying to ignore Kirsha's unpleasantness, he begins reciting again:

"Abu Saada, the Zanaty, says that . . ."

The café owner shouts in angry exasperation:

"Are you going to force your recitations on us? That's the end—the end! Didn't I warn you last week?"

A look of disappointment comes into the poet's face and he says in a tone of criticism:

"I can see you have been living fast lately. Can't you take it out on someone else?"

Even more exasperated, Kirsha shouts again:

"I know what I said and what I want, you imbecile. Do you think I am going to allow you to perform in my café if you are going to slander me with your vile tongue?"

The old poet sweetens his tone a little as he tries to soothe the angry man and says:

"This is my café too. Haven't I been reciting here for the last twenty years?"

The café owner takes his usual seat behind the till and replies:

"We know all the stories you tell by heart and we don't need to run through them again. People today don't want a poet. They keep asking me for a radio and there's one over there being installed now. So go away and leave us alone and may God provide for you . . ."

The old man's face clouds and he remembers sadly that Kirsha's café is the only one left to him and, indeed, his last source of livelihood and one which has done him well. Only the day before the Castle café sent him away. Old as he is, and now with his living cut off, what is he to do with his life? What is the point of teaching his poor son his profession when it has died like this? What could the future hold for him and how could he provide for his son? A feeling of despair seizes him and increases in intensity when he sees the look of regretful determination on Kirsha's face. The old man pleads:

"Slowly, slowly, Mr. Kirsha. Public reciters still have an appeal which won't disappear. The radio will never replace us."

Firmly and decisively, however, the café owner replies:

"That is what you say, but it is not what my customers say and you are not going to ruin my business. Everything has changed!"

In despair, the old man insists:

"Haven't people listened to these stories without being bored since the days of the Prophet, peace be upon him?"

Kirsha brings his hand down hard on the till and shouts:

"I said everything has changed!"

At this . . . [an] absent-minded and statuesque man wearing . . . gold-rimmed spectacles and . . . [a] necktie moves for the first time. He turns his gaze to the café's roof and sighs so deeply that his friends almost expect pieces of flesh to come up with the passage of air. In a dreamy tone, he says:

"Yes, everything has changed. Yes, indeed, everything has changed. . . . Everything has changed except my heart and it still loves the people . . ."

He lowers his head slowly, moving it to the left and to the right as he does so, with movements gradually decreasing in extent until he at last returns to his previous immobile position. Once again he sinks into oblivion. None of those present, accustomed as they are to his peculiarities, has so much as turned toward him, with the exception of the old reciter who looks at him and says appealingly:

"Sheikh Darwish, are you happy now?"

The other man remains, however, as though lost to the world and says nothing. Just then another person arrives who is greeted with looks of admiration and affection, and they all respond enthusiastically to his greeting.

Radwan Hussainy is a man of impressive appearance, both broad and tall, a flowing black cloak covering his ample form, his face large and whitish with tinges of red. He wears a reddish-colored beard. His forehead seems to shine with light and its surface gleams with happiness, tolerance and deep faith. He walks slowly, with his head slightly bent, and a smile on his lips announces his love for both people and life.

He chooses a seat next to the poet's sofa and, as soon as he does so, the old man begins to complain to him. Radwan Hussainy listens good-naturedly, although he knows well what the trouble is. Indeed, on a number of occasions he has tried to dissuade the café owner, Kirsha, from his intention to dispense with the reciter but he has always been unsuccessful. When the old man finishes his complaint, Hussainy does what he can to console him and promises to help him find a job for the poet's son. He then generously places some coins in his hand and whispers in his ear:

"We are all sons of Adam. If poverty descends on you then seek help from your brother. Man's provider is God and it is to God that any excess is due."

Going to a Koranic School

> *Knowledge acquired as a child is more lasting than an engraving on stone.*
>
> —Arab proverb

◆§*Editor's Introduction:* We have seen one source of learning in the traditional Middle East: the oral tradition in the home and in the market place. But many children also learned more formally, by going to school, for schools have existed in the Middle East from earliest times.

Traditional schools were Koranic schools, named after the Koran, the Moslem holy book. These schools, usually located in mosques (Moslem places of worship), were concerned primarily with teaching boys to recite and interpret the Koran. The teachers were called *mullahs*, *fqihs*, or *hocas*, depending on where in the Middle East the schools were located.

In the great cities of the Middle East there were also universities where students could learn literature, philosophy, and science. Some of these universities have existed for more than a thousand years.

As Europeans began to colonize the Middle East in the eighteenth century, they established secular schools. In many cases these European schools did not admit Moslem students. However, after the Europeans left, in the 1940s and 1950s, their schools remained and began to compete for students with the Koranic schools. Today, almost all Middle Eastern students go to secular schools, which in most ways are similar to American schools.

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But Koranic schools, with their emphasis on memorization of the Koran, still exist.

The following selection, from a novel set in Morocco, describes the experiences of a young student at a Koranic school. How do the children learn in this school? Why does Abdeslam's father want him to go to a secular school?

❧

ACROSS THE STREET from the house where Abdeslam lived there was a mosque. Here the boys chanted their lessons all day. When Abdeslam was six years old his father told him it was time for him too to go and study the Koran with the others.

The first day his father went with him and gave some money to the *fqih*. "Look after him. Make him learn," he said, and then he went away.

Abdeslam sat down facing the *fqih*. He did not know what was going to happen, but he thought the *fqih* would probably give him a *hanasha*, a board to write on. Instead of that, he made him sit with the other boys and sing the letters of the alphabet after him: *a-lif, el-ba, et-tsa,* and so on. They did this all day for many days, Abdeslam and the others, singing the letters after the *fqih*. Then one morning the *fqih* told them: "Today I'm going to pass out *hanashas*, so you can learn to write and read the letters faster."

Abdeslam was delighted. He and the boys rocked back and forth and pounded their *hanashas* while they recited the letters. When he told his father about it, he went out and bought him a fine board of cedar-wood from Moulay Brahim, so he would always have something to hit while he sang the letters. His father told him that this way the letters would go straight into his head and stay there. Some of the other boys brought *hanashas* from home, too, made of apple- or olive-wood, but they did not smell as good as Abdeslam's.

The *fqih* began to teach the boys the beginning of the Koran. In two years' time Abdeslam already had reached the *Baqra Seghira*. His father went to the mosque and said to the *fqih:* "I hear my son has got to the *Baqra Seghira*. Is that true?"

"Yes," said the *fqih*. "It is true, thanks to Allah."

Two years is very little time in which to learn so much of the Koran. Abdeslam had learned fast because his father's brother, who lived in the house with his family and could read the Koran very well, had taken him into his room each day when he got home from school and taught him more.

Abdeslam's father thanked the *fqih*. Then he and his brother went to the cattle-*souq* [market] and bought a young bull. They led it home and killed it, and invited thirty *tolba* to come and recite the Koran. The *tolba* were all young men who knew it perfectly and were used to chanting it together. It was late at night when they finished. Then Abdeslam's mother and sisters served them the flesh of the bull in a *couscous* [cooked ground wheat served with a meat and vegetable sauce].

Abdeslam enjoyed his life. There was the world outside, with trees and houses and places to play, and the world of words and letters in the mosque. He felt that he was learning more every day. It was a year or so later when his father met him at the door as he came home from school one day and said to him: "Your *fqih* tells me you know the whole first part of the Book, and can read it and write it. That's good. Now you're going to go to school."

Abdeslam did not want this. He knew it was a harder kind of work. "Why can't I stay at the mosque?" he said. "I want to be a *fqih*."

"You've got to learn arithmetic and French and all sorts of things. You don't know anything yet. Later you can be a *fqih*."

"But Baba, I like it at the mosque. I won't understand anything at the school. I want to learn more of the Koran."

"School," said his father.

Abdeslam sighed.

"My Mind Was Open for Information and Wisdom"

Search knowledge though it be in China.
—Arab proverb

Editor's Introduction: Although a sizable number of boys in the Middle East have always gone to school, girls have traditionally been educated only in very small numbers. The few girls who were educated came from the wealthiest families and were either sent to small, private schools or educated at home by private tutors. A girl's place was believed to be in the home; it was not thought necessary to educate a large number of girls.

Today, however, most girls attend elementary schools, and most Middle Eastern governments are attempting to provide opportunities for them to go to high school and college as well. This revolution in women's education has come primarily in the last twenty or thirty years. In 1965 in Iraq, for example, 30 percent of the elementary students, 23 percent of the high school students, and 25 percent of the students at the University of Baghdad were female. These figures, which are typical of the Middle East as a whole, represent a dramatic change in attitudes toward the education of women and point to the day when women will be given the same opportunities for education as men.

In the selection that follows, an Iranian woman, Najmeh

From pp. 45–51 in *Persia Is My Heart* by Najmeh Najafi and Helen Hinckley. Copyright 1953 by Najmeh Najafi and Helen Hinckley Jones. By permission of Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc.

Najafi, describes how she first went to school. What meaning does school have for Najmeh? What meaning does it have for you? Is there a difference? If so, how can you account for it?

◆

MY GREATEST TRAVELING in those days was down the avenue and across a few streets to the school.

I had been in school since I was five, but the school had not yet begun to broaden my life. . . . Ordinarily children in Persia [Iran] do not go to school until they are six. There are no kindergartens in connection with the public schools of our country. There are the ancient *mektabs,* Moslem schools, kept for little girls by old women whose faces are like withered apples, the fingers on their hands like winter dead twigs; for the boys by old men.

Once when I was three or maybe four, my mother sent me to such a school. She and Zarah were busy and it seemed a good idea. I remember that my mother gave me a book before she left me seated at the feet of the old lady. I don't remember much except that we were told to keep quiet. Some way I got a pair of scissors and cut all the pictures out of my book. . . . At noon we were served wheat cakes for lunch, and after I had eaten I lay down on the carpet and slept. It was the time for my nap.

I do not remember whether I went to the *mektab* for two days or three.

When I was five one of my friends, a girl maybe two years older than I, maybe three, stopped at my house on the way to school. "Come along with me," she suggested. "No one will be angry."

"No one will be angry? They won't be angry at the school?" I asked, to make doubly certain before I made any decision. . . .

"No one will be angry," my friend again assured me, and I went with her to the school.

The school, like my home, was built on three sides of a rather large court. In the center of the court was a pool. . . .

At the other end of the pool the school janitors had the first room. It was a large supply closet really, but they had stocked it with candy and other goodies which they sold to the girls for several times the price charged in the bazaars. I do not know how they got this concession, whether by purchase or "gift." They were nicknamed by the girls "Father" and "Mother." The rest of that wing and the building facing the court from the rear contained classrooms.

You ask about the lavatory? Listen, we are talking about Persia.

There was a small closet where the *aftabe* was kept. The *aftabe* is a rather large round jug with a narrow neck and a wide mouth. On one side is a spout, on the other side is a handle. The *aftabe* is for use if you need a rest room. After you have used it you carry it to the pool in the center of the court, empty it, and wash it clean. That is what the pool is really for —for the emptying and washing of the *aftabe*.

We do not mind using the *aftabe* at school. We are all girls at the school and besides we are used to the same system at home.

After my friend had shown me where the *aftabe* was kept, she took me to the first-grade room and I went in alone. No one asked, "Whose girl is this? What age is she?" I was given a seat with Nahede and Mastaneh, who today are two of my best friends, though we have gone different ways in life. Mastaneh is married and has a home and children. Nahede is a student in Teheran. Sitting there with the two little girls all day, I had a delicious sense of belonging.

Things weren't quite so smooth at home when I returned that afternoon, though. "Where have you been? Why did you go?" These were the questions. "You are too young for school —a baby," both Zarah and my mother said. Perhaps they were thinking of my three days at *mektab*.

"But I want to go to school," I coaxed. The next morning my mother went with me and signed my name on the school records.

I sometimes wonder why I was so willing, even eager, to sit absolutely still for six hours a day, six days a week. There is no play in the schools of my country, and the only free day is Friday, the Moslem Sabbath.

There are six grades, equivalent to the eight grades in an

American elementary school. The whole approach to learning is different. First there are the twenty-five letters of our alphabet that we must learn to recognize and recite in order. Next we must learn how these letters make words. Very soon we are given a book and begin to sound out the words and see them in sentences. The back of a Persian book is the front to an American. Starting on the last page we read each line from right to left.

As soon as we begin to master the reading of Farsi, the language of Persia, we must learn Arabic since the Koran is written in that language and it is important that each person be able to read about her religion for herself. Arithmetic is another subject that Persians are particularly quick at learning. Omar Kháyyam, the Persian poet that all English readers know, also wrote a book on algebra. The numbers we learn in school are similar to yours, since we too got them and our decimal system from the Arabs. . . .

School is tiring for the body but it is refreshing to the mind. Have you seen a fish that has just been taken from the water with its mouth open reaching for air? My mind has always been like the fish's mouth—open for information and wisdom. . . .

My favorite aunt . . . during the school vacation . . . coaxed me to spend as much time with her as I could. She loved me as she had when I was tiny. But now there was a difference in our relationship. Before, she had been my teacher, showing me how to sew, listening to me repeat my devotions; now I was her teacher. Each word I learned to read and write I taught to her.. She laughed with delight when I checked her small arithmetic problems and found them correct. She clapped her hands when she read a chapter in my primer without error. She had never had a chance to attend school and she was hungry for knowledge. Perhaps it was from her that I learned that there is a joy in learning that people who take education for granted may never find.

One day—I believe I was in the third grade or perhaps in the fourth—I saw on the teacher's desk a globe with wide expanses of blue surrounding odd-shaped, varicolored patches. All morning I kept my eyes upon the globe, waiting for an explanation. At last the teacher said, "We shall study geography. This globe stands for the world."

In a second I knew that all of the blue spaces were oceans and that the varicolored areas were the "lands and people." . . . First, of course, we found Persia; next our near neighbors; and finally, twirling the globe slowly, Western Europe and on the other side of a wide space of blue, America.

I do not know whether or not my teacher was particularly gifted in the teaching of geography. I know only that the subject captivated me; maps became my favorite possessions, and I followed every strange name with the thought that some day I would see that place.

Because I dreamed always of travel. I kept my ears listening for talk about the Trans-Iranian Railway which was being built to connect the Persian Gulf with the Caspian Sea.

Editor's Postscript: Najmeh Najafi's dream did come true; she was able to travel and see other lands. She came to the United States for university training and has had a successful career in business and social work in Iran. She has written two books in English about her native land with the help of an American, Helen Hinckley: *Persia Is My Heart* and *A Wall and Three Willows.*

Behavior and Morality

A bad wound heals
but a bad word doesn't.
—Persian proverb

Editor's Introduction: Traditionally in the Middle East boys and girls were allowed to play together when they were young but were separated before they reached their teens. Once this separation took place, there was little contact between the sexes until marriage. However, because of the value placed on having many children, young people usually married in their early teens. The separation of the sexes, then, generally lasted no more than six or seven years.

In the modern Middle East, however, marriage often does not take place until the early twenties, after a young man or woman finishes school. In such cases boys and girls may be separated for ten years or more. This prolonged period of separation is seen by many Middle Easterners as too long and unnatural and is beginning to break down as various dating systems are being tried out.

In order to preserve the reputation of her family and to properly prepare her for marriage, the life of a young girl in the Middle East is highly regulated. What she can and cannot do are carefully spelled out. The girl's family even after she marries will be judged on the basis of her behavior. Qualities of character are stressed: hard work, not being a gossip, holding one's temper, and not showing oneself off to men. This last quality is especially emphasized; flirtations and love affairs have serious consequences

From Hilma Granquist, *Birth and Childhood Among the Arabs* (Helsinki, Finland: Söderström and Co., 1950), pp. 159–65.

and often lead to violence or even death. A woman's actions reflect on everyone in the household, and her father or brother, if she is unmarried, or her husband, if married, is bound to uphold the family honor by punishing those at fault—the man, if that is the case, or the woman herself.

A woman must therefore always act modestly and avoid drawing attention to herself in public. Traditionally women in the Middle East wore veils and long robes that touched the ground. In the parts of the Middle East where veils were not worn, women were expected to cover their faces with their shawls or headcloths when in sight of men. Even in the modern, Westernized Middle East, where most women do not wear veils, they are expected to keep their eyes to the ground when passing a man and to walk purposefully so as not to appear to be loitering. Any other behavior is interpreted as an invitation to the man to make an advance. For this reason Western women, by acting in a way that is natural to them, are often signaling something quite different to Middle Eastern men.

In the following selection a Danish scholar describes how girls were traditionally brought up in Palestine (Israel). What rules of behavior are taught these young girls? According to these rules, how well behaved would an American girl be considered? ❧

THERE ARE MANY rules and much advice as to the behavior and morality of a girl. Quite early it is impressed upon her that she must learn to control herself and watch that she does nothing improper. Of how she is taught good manners Alya says:

> If she scratches her head she is scolded.
> If she licks the ladle from the cooking-pot, she is scolded.
> If she eats out-of-doors she is scolded.
> In the evening after the hens are shut up, the women should not be out-of-doors.

Fatme Jedallah: "Except at weddings when they may go out, otherwise it is a shame." Sitt Louisa: "Indeed, weddings mean great freedom." . . .

A woman has the right to be out in the morning because her work requires it. And if a man then [bothers] her, his punishment will be very severe. But already at noon it is different. She really ought to have finished her work outside. And if

The Middle East has traditionally been a man's world. When women needed to go out they were expected to cover their faces and make themselves as inconspicuous as possible.

a man then . . . [bothers] her his punishment is not so great. But if this happens in the evening the fault is hers. Why was she out so late? She has no right to be out in the evening. This concerns the women who are on the outskirts of the village where they must go to get water and collect wood, grass, and herbs.

Nor must a woman run about in the village or to the neighbors. This is wrong in itself, and besides leads to gossip, quarreling, and trouble of all kinds.

Alya expresses the disapproval such behavior arouses in the following way:

> Running about means gossiping and mischief-making.
> She must not be a running-about woman.
> She must not go among the women.
> She must not go from house to house.
> If she repeats what others say, she is scolded.
> If she repeats what others say, it is as if she carried dust about.

The Arabs condemn gossip by comparing it to the carrying of dust from one house to another. Nor shall gossip be carried from home to the neighbors. The woman warns her daughter: "Tell not the neighbors what we cooked!" It is considered especially improper to go and lift the lid of another's cooking pot and see what they are cooking; the neighbors shall not talk about and discuss what is being cooked in any house. It is no concern of the neighbors what happens in the family.

Least of all shall the members of the family gossip about each other. Hear again the advice given to the daughter by the mother concerning her co-wife:

"If thy father's wife speaks against me, do not tell me about it!"

The mother threatens that if the daughter does this, she will punish her. "I shall whip thee!" And her argument is very fine.

"The one who said it does not bear the shame but the one who carried it further!"

Further, a mother says to her daughter:

> Do not steal from the garden! It is shameful!
> Neither figs nor tomatoes! Do not steal anything!

A father gives similar advice to his daughter when as a bride she leaves his house:

> Be careful and take nothing from the property of the neighbors,
> and lay not thy hand on a stranger's property!
> Be perfect! Let not the women make fun of thee!

And the mother uses the same opportunity to repeat some of the advice she has already many times earlier tried to impress on her daughter.

> See my child! If she laughs [much], it is shameful!
> If she repeats what others say, it is shameful!
> If she lies, it is shameful! . . .

The mother adds:

> If she laughs with young men, it is shameful!
> If she steals, it is shameful!

In the Arabs' moral code for women the rules and advice for their behavior towards men are very important. Some concern their behavior toward the husband and others their behavior toward strange men.

A woman must not raise her voice against her husband. This is a reason for divorce. He is her lord (*ba'el*).

The tongue of the wife shall be "sweet."

If a bride is praised for her stately figure and her beauty, the reply may be:

> The milk is white too,
> a tree is high
> and a cow fat!

This implies that praise of a bride's beauty is superfluous. Other qualities are necessary. The tongue is the most important. What if a woman is beautiful if she has an evil tongue? The faculty of speech distinguishes man from all other beings on earth. Much in life depends upon how the gift is used. Does not a proverb say: "A kind word can attract even the snake from his nest"?

And a woman shall speak to her husband in such a way that he shall be good-tempered. She shall not cause trouble and bring disharmony into his house.

Again, a woman shall always show her husband a happy face.

Another saying is: "The woman is her husband's mirror."

To this Sitt Louisa said: "This means that the one face expresses the same as the other. If thy face smiles, it brings joy. If the wife's face is sour and angry, the husband gets bad-tempered."

How the Arabs dislike a gloomy face appears from the following statement:

> My first trouble is a miserable face.
> My second trouble is blood-guiltiness.
> And my third trouble, war with my father's brother.

It is also said:

> The first evil, from which I take refuge in God,
> is entering an unlighted house.
> And the second is the company of mad people.
> And the third is a defiant face!

. . . the Arab view . . . [is]:

> The Prophet—upon him be prayer—said:
> "There are three things in the world which give joy."
> "What?"—"Firstly, fresh water, secondly, fresh green.
> Thirdly, a fresh and beautiful face."

This does not imply that a woman shall show a friendly face to everyone. As far as strange men are concerned a woman cannot be careful enough.

Alya: "If she talks with the men, she is scolded. Thou hast no right to speak with the men!"

If a woman must pass some men, she shall modestly draw her head-cloth over her face, so that they cannot catch a glimpse of it. She shall also conceal her hands. . . .

The mother says to her daughter: "If thou art walking alone, and a man is behind thee, do not turn round!" The men talk in their club and say: "So-and-so walked and turned round!" . . .

Alya states: "If she does not turn out to be a well-behaved girl, the one who brought her up is cursed."

The mother is blamed for all faults. Therefore a mother appeals to her daughter and says: "Dost thou not wish to protect my honor from others? Dost thou wish to shame me?"

Again, to a good daughter it is said:

> Let the womb live that bore thee!
> Let the breasts live which suckled thee!

The mother of a good girl is blessed and is wished long life on the earth.

A married woman must also be very careful in her behavior toward the men. This is especially important for a woman married in another place. . . .

When Saada, wife of Mhammad Yusef . . . was brought as a child bride from the neighboring village of el-Khadr to Artas, she went the next morning to the spring to fetch water. Hamdiye, who was also there, told me how all those at the spring saw Saada lift up her dress so high that her henna-decorated feet and legs were seen. The girl-bride was naturally so happy and proud of them that she could not help showing them. But this at once gave offense. And Hamdiye, according to what she said, went and reproached her for the raised dress.

"Remember," she said, "that thou art now in Artas!" She implied: "In thy home village people may not be so particular of women's morals. But here in Artas we demand respectable women!" . . .

Her parents and the people in her village know it only too well. So they warn her already beforehand and urge her to be extremely careful not to give offense in her husband's village.

The exceptionally strict morality demanded from a stranger wife gives rise to the advice given to a daughter when being educated and to the advice and the warnings addressed to her when leaving her home, and this gives an extremely good idea of the moral standard to which the women are educated.

I give here some examples:

"As a stranger—thou must not speak to men and not lift thy dress! And not sit with the neighbors and not smile at the men. The men will take hold of thee, the men will try. Watch! Be not free with them! If they curse thee, look angry and curse them again and strike!"

And: "In thy life among strangers—do not quarrel with the people! Do not carry tales!"

And: "Be careful in thy stranger life! Let nobody speak about thee, nor the women make fun of thee! The women flatter thee to thy face and afterwards are stinging scorpions. Cleverness is needed for the men—and purity! The stranger woman must be perfect!"

This advice finishes with the wish:

"Let thy people say: Let her live and may the house from which she comes, live! Bravo for her! And let them not say: May she be cursed!"

Only a good daughter can bring her family honor and blessing.

And yet people sometimes bewail, and have reason to bewail their hard fortune in being obliged to bring up a daughter only to be cursed by strangers in her husband's house later on.

Watching One's Reputation

Eat what you please,
but wear what pleases others.
—Egyptian proverb

Editor's Introduction: Belonging to an extended family can be difficult as well as supportive, for although you have more people to turn to for help, you also have more people to observe you to make sure you do not hurt the reputation of the family. Girls are especially watched over, for if they run away or marry without their parents' permission, the reputation of the family will be ruined. In many ways the custom of watching over girls in Middle Eastern towns and villages is like the close notice taken of what people are doing in small towns in the United States and elsewhere. In such towns everyone knows and talks about what his neighbor is doing, who is visiting whom, who took a walk with whom, and the like.

In the selection that follows, which takes place in Turkey, we see that even when a woman is away from her family, her reputation affects the people with whom she lives and works. The main character, Feridé Hanim, is a schoolteacher from Istanbul sent by the Ministry of Education to a small town. The incident described is from her diary. How does Feridé's behavior create a scandal? Why does a sophisticated working woman still have to watch her reputation?

15TH MAY

THIS EVENING, WHEN school was over, the headmistress asked me to come to her room; and this is what she said:

Nuri Guntekin, *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl* (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1949), pp. 252–254.

"Feridé Hanim, my dear, I am very pleased with your keenness and the serious way in which you do your work. But you have one fault. You still believe yourself to be in Istanbul. There's a well-known proverb that says 'Beauty always brings trouble.' You're both pretty and young, so you ought to look after yourself better; but you've been guilty of several . . . [mistakes in your conduct]. Now, don't get into a state, my dear; I'm not saying it's your fault, but I do say that you've been incautious. For instance, this place is not so much behind the times that women can't go about smartly dressed, and that applies to our teachers as well. But what may seem quite natural to others has attracted attention in you, because, my dear girl, your youth and beauty have turned the head of every man you meet, to such an extent that there has begun to be talk in the town. I sit here as if I knew nothing, but I get news of all that's going on. From the officers in [the army] and the businessmen in the cafés, right down to the older students in the secondary school, there's not a soul that doesn't recognize you at a distance; not one that doesn't talk about you.

"And now you might ask by what right I speak to you about these things, and why I do so; and there are two reasons, my dear. The first is that you're a really good child, but after all, very inexperienced. I've become something of an expert in human nature, and so I want to be a kind of mother, or aunt, to you. And the second reason is that there is the good name of the school to be considered. Isn't that so, my dear?"

Without looking me in the face, she continued . . . "The school is a sacred place, like the Mosque. It's my most important duty to protect it from gossip, scandal, and every other kind of evil. Isn't it? But all this talk has, unfortunately, drawn attention to the school. Do you notice how many fathers and brothers have come to fetch their daughters and sisters? It may be you haven't noticed it, but I have. They come to see you, not to fetch the children. It seems that one day you tied up one of the poorer children's hair with a bit of ribbon; I don't know how the news got about, but [a] young [soldier] met the child in the street, gave her some money, took the ribbon, and went off with it. And now, from time to time, he sticks it in his buttonhole, and makes his friends laugh by saying, 'Now you've got to look up to me. I've been given a decoration by

Gülbeşeker.'[*] And yesterday our doorkeeper, Mehmet, brought me some strange news. Some drunk men coming back from the public house the night before stopped in front of the school door, and one of them made a speech, in which he said, 'I saw Gülbeşeker touch a black stone in the wall. For God's sake let us worship.'

"So you see, my dear, these goings-on are neither good for you nor for the school. But as if all this was not enough, you've committed another indiscretion; you seem to have had a talk with Captain Ihsan in Abdurahman's house. If you had accepted Madame's proposal[†] no harm would have been done, but to meet a young man and then to refuse so good an offer has attracted attention. 'Ah, she refuses Ihsan Bey, it means she loves someone else; who is it, I wonder?' That's the kind of talk going around now."

I listened to all she had to say without answering or moving. The headmistress, who was afraid at first that I should object and protest, began at last to be uneasy at my silence. With some show of hesitation she said, "What have you got to say to all this, Feridé Hanim?"

I sighed deeply, and said, "It's all true, headmistress. I was beginning to be aware of it myself. I'm sorry to have to leave this lovely place, but what can I do? Write to the Department and make some excuse for having me sent somewhere else. Your greatest generosity and kindness would be not to give the real reason but to find some other excuse. You can say, 'She lacks knowledge of administration,' or 'She won't work, she is idle,' or 'Insubordinate.' Say what you like, I shan't complain. But don't say, 'She's become the talk of the town!'"

The headmistress said nothing, but she thought hard. I turned to the window, in order not to show that my eyes had filled with tears. I looked at the mountains opposite; they seemed like clouds slowly fading away in the darkening sky. Ah! Calikusu[‡] was beginning to feel the wind of exile again, from those mountains. The wind of exile! It's a phrase without meaning for those who have never really experienced it. In my mind's eye, there spread out before me roads growing narrower and narrower, and more and more dreary, that seemed to have no end to them. . . .

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[*] The villagers' nickname for Feridé.

[†] Ihsan's mother's proposal that Feridé marry her son.

[‡] "The Wren" in Turkish. Feridé Hanim's nickname for herself.

5TH JUNE

. . . During these long holiday months I have been imprisoned . . . the headmistress said there was no chance to transfer me before September. For the present, then, I tried to let myself be forgotten. I hardly even went out, and my neighbors no longer sought me out as they had before. Maybe they were frightened by the gossip.

The Public Bath

§*Editor's Introduction:* As we have seen, girls in the Middle East did not traditionally go to school but stayed at home and learned from their mothers how to be good wives and how to raise children. Thus a Middle Eastern girl may have had ten or fifteen years' experience taking care of babies and children by the time she herself became a mother. In America, by contrast, it sometimes happens that the first baby a woman has ever held is her own.

Whether a young girl's life in the Middle East is spent at home or at school, great effort is put into planning for her marriage. Traditionally, as we have noted, girls married a cousin, for in this way extended family units within the clan could remain close and there was some assurance that the bride would become a member of a friendly family with the same customs. Furthermore, marrying a cousin meant that the bride price (dowry) would not be given to strangers.

Traditionally, and to some extent today, the final decision as to whom a child marries lay with the parents, especially the mother. Because children tended to marry young, parents felt that their superior experience and maturity were essential in choosing a partner for their child. Furthermore, traditional marriage in the Middle East was in many ways a marriage between two *families*, a kind of alliance that tended to ensure cooperation between these families. It is understandable, therefore, that a great deal of attention was paid to finding and appraising potential wives and husbands.

From pp. 84–87 in *Persia Is My Heart* by Najmeh Najafi and Helen Hinckley. Copyright 1953 by Najmeh Najafi and Helen Hinckley Jones. By permission of Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc.

One of the places where young girls could be observed and where mothers could discuss the marriage of their children was the public bath, called *hammam* throughout the Middle East. In the following description of a public bath in Iran, what role does the bath attendant play in arranging marriages?

◆

THE BATH HOUSE that I like best has not been changed in the memory of man. It is built of brick—as all of these houses are. The door is level with the avenue, but once you step over the threshold you must descend eight or ten steps to reach the floor level. A very thin woman sits on a sort of stool behind a high table . . . takes your money, and motions you to a seat against the wall.

No foreign people enter these ancient baths. They might not be "clean." All around the large room with its brick walls painted in steam-softened colors, perhaps fifteen by twenty-

Some young girls in the Middle East, especially in the big towns and cities, have adopted miniskirts, like this girl walking with her mother in Morocco.

five feet, there is a brick ledge for sitting and for holding the bath case you have brought. In the center of the room is a square pool of cold water. This is not for bathing. There is a short passageway that leads from this room to the real bath, as you say, "Turkish bath." Here the air is comforting with steam. All around the room, even larger than the other, is a very low brick ledge for sitting. We have undressed in the other room and now each woman sits upon a brightly lacquered tray to be certain that she is sitting on a clean place. Now will come the attendants of the bath to wait on us. There are bright copper bowls on the floor in front of each woman. These the attendants keep filled with hot water from the large pool at the end of the room.

I have a special attendant . . . for whom I wait because I like the way she works. While she rubs over the body with her hand encased in a very soft knitted bath mitten, someone else will be washing the hair; applying the henna [a reddish substance Middle Eastern women often put on their hair and hands]. Henna is a custom in my country. It is not used for color but to make the hair strong. We are all woman and . . . we purr in the luxury of sweet-scented soapsuds, warm water, and gently massaging hands. There is much gaiety, much laughter. The best of food is sent from the homes, for this is an activity that will take several hours, and hot tea is served with the fruit and bread and other delicacies.

What do we talk about? Women things of course. Food, and children, and clothes, and husbands. Politics, too, because now that women are attending higher schools, even doing some work in the world of man, they are better informed about the world. Many women will quote their husbands on all important matters; men are still the head of the house and most often do the thinking for the women and hand down ideas as if their judgment were infallible.

But often when the young girls are at the bath the talk is of the girls themselves. This girl has a musical laugh, this one hair which curls even in the steam, this one a fresh sweet skin. The women are constantly on the watch for suitable brides for their kinsmen—their brothers, their cousins, their sons.

From behind her copper washing bowl a dark, thin woman with a straight-boned face half-covers her mouth as her eyes travel over the body of a twelve-year-old. She whispers to her neighbor, "Who is that child?" The neighbor looks and shakes her head. With a gesture the woman calls the girl's bath attendant to her. "Who is that child? Of what family?"

Now the bath attendant glows with enthusiasm. She tells all she knows about the girl, information she has been [collecting] over a period of time for just such an opportunity. This girl, she says, comes from the most ancient and honorable family in Teheran. She is kin to the royal family. . . . The family has wealth. The girl arrives at the bath in a great Cadillac with two uniformed servants. The girl is unspoiled by all this family importance, all this wealth. She is simple and sweet. Her hair is of fine texture and she hasn't a tooth missing. And her skin! Like pear blossoms to the touch.

Much of the account will be exaggerated but the woman who is asking can separate the truth from the fiction. She knows that if [an engagement] comes of a visit to the home of the girl the bath attendant will expect a large tip from her.

There will be other [rewards for] the women, too. Two days before the wedding the girl will invite to the bath house twenty or thirty friends to spend the day in cleansing . . . for this function there will be a feast from the home of the bride. The attendant will share the feast. There will be a gift of a fine new dress to the woman who washes the bride.

When the attendant answers . . . she must tell all the good, conceal the not-so-good, and add as much as is credible to the story, for she is playing for great winnings.

In the city bath house and in the bath house of the village, the conversation is the same. Always in the minds of the women there is a lively interest in the young girls. For the women are the suitors of Persia. When a young girl leaves her tray to go into the hot pool or to dip screaming into the . . . cold pool, many eyes will follow her. The girl does not mind. She knows that the . . . woman in her country [must be a beautiful wife] and respected mother. She is flattered by the admiring glances and smiles inside herself at the tall tale that she is sure the bath attendant is telling.

Courtship

❧*Editor's Introduction:* Traditional courtship in the Middle East was carried out by the parents and relatives of the couple, not by the young man and woman themselves. In many cases a young couple would have played together as children and would remember each other, but often they would not have seen each other for several years. Sometimes a young man, remembering a girl he had played with and liked, would ask his mother to ask her friends about the girl's character, beauty, and reputation and to observe her at the public bath or visit her at her home.

Traditionally, when a girl reached marriageable age—usually between thirteen and seventeen years old—groups of women representing various families would visit the girl at her home to observe her maturity and readiness for marriage. During these visits the girl was expected to be on her best behavior, serve tea and refreshments, and play an instrument or perform in some way. Often girls were unprepared for the first visit, as we see in the following selection. How does this Iranian girl feel about the Western dating system? How does she react to her own system when the women come to visit her?❧

THE OTHER DAY I wrote a letter to a girlfriend in Persia and I told her that I still like best the Persian way of choosing a wife for a man. Women can see reality, real virtues, important things. Not for them will a pretty face cover evil temper.

From pp. 87–94 in *Persia Is My Heart* by Najmeh Najafi and Helen Hinckley. Copyright 1953 by Najmeh Najafi and Helen Hinckley Jones. By permission of Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc.

The wife of a very exceptional American man once asked me, "What are you going to do when you finish school here?"

She is an intelligent woman, much interested in what is happening all over the world, so I began to tell her about my plans [to do social work in Iranian villages].

"You don't want to do that," she said. "Why don't you catch an American husband?"

"Catch?" I said. "Catch?"

"Yes, I caught mine. He did not think of marrying me at first so I told him I wanted to marry him and he agreed."

I know that she is joking but still I don't like the American word "catch." At college I do not like the way American girls display themselves for the men. . . .

I have watched the courtship of my two brothers with my mother doing the courting. Both of my brothers married friends of our family. . . . My mother had known the girls since they were little children so she did not have to set an inquiry around in the bath house. But there was [another] procedure she did follow.

It is the custom for the mother, with as many female relatives as care to [go along, to] make the call. . . . The call is a polite one, but all eyes are open. The girl knows the eyes are upon her and she feels her knees knocking together, her smile made of cardboard on her face, her hands trembling. For this call she has prepared herself without make-up. Make-up might hide a blemish, which the mother must see if she is not to be deceived. If her hair is straight it is combed straight, not "set" in handmade waves. My curly hair was born with me so I do not need to wear my hair straight for suitors.

The girl pours tea and shows her knowledge of grace and etiquette. If she is a musician she may sing or play a musical instrument, or if she is a dancer she may dance one of the traditional dances of my country. . . .

Once outside the house there is much talking between the female suitors. "I saw—" says one. "You did!" The other rolls the eyes in disbelief. "Well, the thing I noticed was—" There is nothing left undiscussed.

If the suitors are pleased with the girl, with her accomplishments, with the wealth and position of her family, next time, very soon, the prospective groom will visit, too. The man will be older than the girl, maybe five years or so. Or maybe he will be a middle-aged or even old man looking [for a second wife].

Westerners are always interested in the harems of Islamic countries. Now they are not like the harem [of] the Arabian Nights stories. A man is allowed by Koranic law to have four wives if he can provide for them and will be just to all of them; but few can afford to keep more than one wife and her family. And to be "just" to four at once? That would be a challenge.

So most older men looking for a wife are those who have lost a wife through death. In America I heard of a widow in her middle sixties who had recently married a man of her age. I was surprised. A girl of fewer years than twenty would have been the choice of such a man in my country.

Reza Shah * made a law forbidding child marriages. The girl, according to law, must be sixteen. But still many girls marry at eleven, twelve, thirteen [in spite of the law].

The first suitor came to my house when I was eleven or twelve. I was at home alone, barefooted, watering can in one hand and a hard chewy cookie in the other. When I saw a carriage stop in front of my home I dropped the watering can in the court and hurried into the house in full view of the . . . ladies who were [getting out].

We do not have bells but knockers on our door. "Knock, knock, knock."

I pushed back the curtain from the small peephole in the door. "What do you want?" I asked, chewing on the cookie.

"We want to see the young girl of the house," the foremost woman said in a very sweet voice.

"I am the girl," I said, still chewing and not opening the door.

"Open the door, dearie," she coaxed. "You seem like a nice child."

Suddenly the awful thought struck me that I was grown up—that these women were suitors! "I'm not ready—for that!" I cried, dropping the curtain and retreating to the back of the house. "Go to another home, please. It is not time for me!"

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* The King of Iran from 1925 to 1940.

The summer that I was fourteen an older cousin, Efaht, was visiting me and we were bored. We spent almost a day in the bath house but there was [nothing to do in] the evening. We had heard a certain girl whom we didn't know discussed in the bath house. "Her mother," my bath attendant had told me, "is very eager to marry her daughter off. We've done all we can for her, but something goes amiss."

"There must be something wrong with such a girl," my cousin's attendant said.

Thinking about this conversation, later, gave us a project to see us over a dull evening.

We sent a servant to announce to this woman that suitors would call. When he returned the two of us dressed carefully . . . and went to pay the call.

We were treated with the greatest respect. That poor girl! She served us fruit and tea and cake—everything of the best. She sang for us. She answered questions, as did her mother. The mother told of the girl's dowry, praised her virtues, declared she had no shortcomings. Finally we withdrew. . . . The mother was reluctant to have us leave without a promise to return. She followed us to the door, still with praise of her daughter.

Afterward Efaht and I . . . laughed and giggled. Perhaps we enjoyed the whole thing because we were both reluctant to see suitors and were being subjected more and more often to such calls. We should have taken pity on the poor, white, shaking, eager girl. But we were too young to know pity.

I did not want to see suitors, but sometimes my mother consented to such calls, and I acted as gracious and grown up as I could. One day my sister Fahri called me and said, "Najmeh, I have special guests coming to my home. Will you come over and help me?"

Of course, I would be glad to.

"Come soon," she suggested. "And wear one of your nicest dresses. These are really important guests."

I hurried over and helped arrange the fruits and cakes and other things on the table. I worked with the flowers. When the guests came I was very, very gay. Sometimes I am like that. . . . Never did I spend a more pleasant evening.

Although marriage is still the first choice of most girls in the Middle East, many now wish to postpone it until they are established in a career. These young Kuwaiti women are studying to be nurses.

After the guests had gone Fahri looked at me from under lowered lids as if she were ashamed of something. "Those were suitors," she said. "They wanted to meet you."

"You did this to me!" I cried, arranging my hands to fit around her neck. "To me!"

Now her blue eyes were wide open, laughing with a white light shining through her face. I laughed, too. No danger about those suitors returning!

But the next day they came back. They were pleased with the girl. She was so gay, so unself-conscious!

I decided not to marry. At least not for a long, long time. But it would be exciting to be [engaged]. I was almost envious of my friends who were happily preparing for marriage. . . .

After the call by the female relatives, after the boy (or man) has visited the home and has said that he is satisfied, then the parents of both the boy and girl get together to talk about the dowry of the girl, the gifts of the boy, the wedding, the ceremony, other matters.

The first gift of the groom's parents to the bride will be, most likely, a diamond ring . . . if the parents can afford it. . . . After this will come the handwritten, beautifully illuminated copy of the Koran. This too is a very expensive gift. Later there will be such gifts as silver candlesticks done with the care and creative precision of the Persian artisan, silver mirrors, lacquered chests—the gifts are reflections of the artistic culture of Persia.

For two or three months, maybe even for a year, the bride will remain in the home of her mother getting her dowry arranged. In my country this is a happy time in the girl's life and in the mother's too, when the two work together for the lifelong happiness of the girl.

As I grew older there were many suitors coming to my home. This does not mean that I was the most attractive girl in Teheran. Ordinarily suitors visit many girls before they make a choice. Sometimes, nowadays, the men themselves select a girl and ask their female relatives to make the first call. Of the many who called at my home there were several who wanted to call again. But I was not satisfied. Ordinarily the girl is not asked if she is satisfied. It is her business to satisfy! But my family understood me. My mother would have liked to have me marry well as Fahti and Fahri did, but she knew that a man who would make an excellent husband for 90 percent of Persian girls would not be happy with me. I must have something more than a good man, a kind man, a man of good family, and position and means. I must have a husband who can read my heart if I open it to him. Who understands what I must do because I am I. . . .

But no. I was not yet ready. I had many dreams, many wishes still unfulfilled. . . . I prayed, "God, let me be just myself, just Najmeh, until I have done the things that I must do."

Removing the Veil

Salt will never be worm-eaten.
—Arab proverb

Editor's Introduction: Throughout the world, including the Middle East, the status and role of women are changing, and men and women are beginning to work out new relationships with each other. Until relatively recently, in the United States as elsewhere, a woman's place was considered to be in the home, and it was only in 1920 that American women first won the right to vote.

One of the signs of the changing status of women in the Middle East is the removal of the veil. The veiling of women was a custom that was borrowed by the Moslems from the Christians of Constantinople, where it was considered a stylish way to distinguish the sophisticated city women from the women of the country. The veil is disappearing in the Middle East at rates varying greatly from country to country. As we see in the next selection, the veil was being removed in Turkey as much as fifty years ago. In Lebanon as well, the majority of women in the large cities have been without veils for many years. In these same countries, however, women from small towns may still be veiled most of the time or may cover their face when passing a man.

In other parts of the Middle East, change has been slower. In Afghanistan, women were not officially allowed to remove the veil until 1959 and have done so only in the larger cities, where the veil has been replaced by scarves or dark glasses. Even in

From Irfan Orga, *Portrait of a Turkish Family* (New York: Macmillan, 1950). By permission of Curtis Brown Ltd.

places where the veil has been removed, women most often walk modestly and avoid looking directly at men. Dating does occur, but it is usually chaperoned.

In the following selection, a Turkish writer describes what happened when his mother decided to remove her veil. The struggle between tradition and change, so obvious here, is typical of what continues to take place in many parts of the Middle East today. Why is Irfan's grandmother opposed to his mother's removing the veil? Why might many mothers and fathers in the Middle East today be concerned about their daughters' taking off the veil? What actually happens to Irfan's mother when she finally does remove her veil?

My mother was rebelling against life. . . . Her rebellion, unexpectedly enough, was against wearing the veil, for she had noticed that none of the foreign women wore them and that even a few of the more daring Turkish women from good families had ceased the practice. . . . She used to complain about it to my grandmother, declaring that she was sick and tired of keeping her face covered. I would interrupt from the lofty perch of my ten years, saying that I would not have her going about the streets with her face open. I would [criticize] her, too, for her many goings-out.

"You are never at home," I would declare; and although usually I was told to mind my own affairs, one day I was very surprised when my grandmother actually agreed with me.

"It is quite true," she said heatedly. "You are always out these days. And it is not right for you to complain that you have to wear the veil. Why, many women . . . never see the color of the sky except from behind their veils. . . . It is a wonder to me that you were accepted in this street, for you behaved exactly like a fast woman looking for another husband or like a prostitute. Yes, you did!" she assured my mother's astonished face. "And now you talk of leaving aside your veil. Why, I lived for thirty years with my husband, and I never went out without his permission and I had to keep my face covered all the time. If I went out in the carriage with Murat, immediately all the windows were closed and sometimes the blinds were drawn too. I say it is a scandal that women today are revealing their faces. God will punish them! Do not let me hear another word from you, my daughter, for surely the sky will open on you for such impiety."

Never had I heard my grandmother talk at such length or with such obvious passion.

My mother replied: "You are talking a great deal of old-fashioned nonsense, Mother! My place is not in the home these days. If I were to sit at home all day, or you either for that matter, who would go to market for us? Do you expect me to stay here all day, reading the Koran and wearing my veil for fear the passersby should see me from the street? I tell you again: From now on I shall go without my veil!"

She angrily tore the pretty veil from her face and threw it . . . on the floor.

My grandmother lifted her hands to heaven.

"I never thought I should live to see this day," she said.

"Ach! Times are changing," said my mother.

"They will say you are a prostitute!" wailed my grandmother, genuinely distressed. . . .

"If they do, it will not worry me," retorted my mother. "Their words will not bring bread to me. And from now on, you will throw aside your veil too, Mother."

"Oh, no, no, no!" said my grandmother in . . . horror. "God forbid that I should invite punishment upon myself!"

But the next morning, when my mother went into Beyoglu with a box of embroidered articles under her arm and her lovely face naked to the world, she was stoned by some children near Bayazit and received a nasty cut on the side of her head.

After that she was cautious about going anywhere alone; but she was obstinate about reveiling herself, and Mehmet or I would go with her to Beyoglu, my grandmother steadfastly refusing to be seen with her. The reaction to her in the street was mixed. The older ones were stricken with horror, more especially since they had always recognized my mother as a good woman; now their faith in her was badly shaken. She was still young and attractive—she was twenty-five—and despite the shadows that lingered now and then in her eyes, she was so unusually beautiful that people could not help staring at her. Certain sections of the street wondered if she were trying to catch a husband. They came in droves, the old men as well, to [complain to] my grandmother, urging her to put a stop to this terrible thing; and my grandmother, thoroughly enjoying herself, would groan to them that she had no authority left in this wayward family of hers. But the younger women sided with my mother, and some of them even began to follow her example. Their fathers, however, in the absence of dead husbands, took a stick to them, muttering piously that no woman in their families would so disgrace themselves. So they put their veils on again in a hurry.

Not a few wished to apply the . . . stick to my mother also. They gave my grandmother sympathy until she was sick of it, prophesying gloomily . . . that my mother would come to a bad end.

And indeed she very nearly did!

For one day in Bayazit, when she was alone, an impressionable Frenchman attempted to flirt with her. She tried walking hurriedly on, but this had no effect at all; or, if anything, it had a worse effect, for the gallant Frenchman became more than ever aware of the swing of her silk skirts and the little dark curls . . . at the nape of her neck. Naturally, he followed her. All the little boys of the district became aware, as is the way of all little boys, of the one-sided flirtation that was in progress. And naturally enough, they followed the tall Frenchman, so there was that day in Bayazit the very, very unusual sight of a young Turkish woman, with open face, followed by a foreigner and innumerable small, dirty-nosed boys. When my mother made the mistake of stopping, trying to explain in her entirely inadequate French that the gentleman was making a great mistake, he took off his hat, bowed elegantly, and declared with obvious feeling, "*Vous êtes ravissante!*" [You are ravishing!]

The small boys, who could not understand a word of what he said, cheered or jeered . . . and my mother—very properly—hurried on, blushing and breathless and perhaps wishing a little for the security of her veil.

When she came down our street, with her procession behind her, the neighbors were more scandalized than ever and ran into their houses to tell the ones inside. But when my mother called out to them in Turkish that she was being followed, and very much against her will, they set to with a vengeance and brought out sticks and brooms, shooing off the . . . [Frenchman] in no uncertain manner. Mehmet and I, who were watching the whole proceedings from the window, were bursting with laughter, but my poor grandmother was quite ready to die of shame.

"Such a disgrace!" she kept saying. "We shall never be able to live in this street again."

But in this she was wrong, for when the street [was finally clear] of the . . . Frenchman, and a few old men had, in fact, chased him halfway to Bayazit with tin buckets in their hands, to break his head, the street settled down again [saying] my mother [was not to] blame—all except the old women, that is.

The Dream

Whatever you sow, you reap.
—Persian proverb

Editor's Introduction: As we have seen, the habits and traditions of the past are in a constant and ongoing interaction with new ideas and ways of doing things in the Middle East. Some people in the Middle East believe that the old, religious way of life and the new, secular, and scientific way are not incompatible and can exist side by side without friction. Not everyone agrees that this can be done, however, and the old and the new are often seen as pitted against each other; one or the other will win out.

We have also seen what changes occur when traditional people are exposed to new ideas from the city. But changes are taking place in the villages and small towns as well, as new technology and people trained in modern ways move out from the cities.

In the selection that follows, a short story from Syria, we see the competition between the old way, represented by the religious Sheikh Mohamed Sa'id, and the new way, represented by the narrator-schoolmaster of a secular government school. Why does the schoolmaster think of himself as a modern man? What does he think of the religious leader of the community? By what means does the schoolmaster attempt to discredit the religious leader? Who, in your opinion, is the real victor of the conflict?

IN HIS DREAM Mohamed Weess saw himself praying. There was nothing extraordinary in this for in his waking hours he

From Abdel Salam Al-Ujaili, "The Dream," in *Modern Arabic Short Stories*, selected and translated by Denys Johnson-Davis. © Oxford University Press 1967. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

was continually praying and never put off performing one of the [five daily] prayers. He saw himself reciting out loud, during his first prostration,* the *Sura* † of *al-Nasr* from the Koran, and on coming to the end of it he had woken up in a state of terror.

"God's word is the truth!" he had said, sitting up in bed and wiping his eyes.

Mohamed Weess could not remember why it was that this of all his dreams should have fixed itself in his mind. However, when morning came he set off in search of Sheikh Mohamed Sa'id, the village elder. Around noon he ran him to ground and told him of his dream. The Sheikh, head lowered and with knotted brows, kept silent for a long time before asking:

"Are you sure that you were reciting the *Sura* of *al-Nasr?*"

"Absolutely," replied Mohamed Weess. "I recited it right through in full: 'When there comes God's help and victory, and thou shalt see men enter into God's religion . . . then celebrate the praises of thy Lord, and ask forgiveness of him, [for] He is [merciful]!' "

"God's word is the truth!" said Sheikh Mohamed Sa'id. "Celebrate the praises of thy Lord, O Mohamed Weess, and ask forgiveness of him . . . [for] He is [merciful]."

"O Sheikh. . . . What do you make of my dream?"

Sheikh Mohamed Sa'id grasped hold of his thick, broad beard and ran his fingers through it. He appeared hesitant. . . .

"O Mohamed Weess," he said eventually, "ask forgiveness of thy Lord, [for] He is [merciful]. The reciting of this *Sura* in one's dreams is a sign that one's end is near."

Of a nervous disposition at the best of times, Mohamed Weess felt a shudder . . . through his entire body.

"What are you saying, O Sheikh."

"It pains me to face you with this," replied the Sheikh. "However, your consolation is that God's mercy will soon be yours. . . . No one who has this dream, Mohamed Weess, lives for more than another forty days."

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* Moslems pray on their knees, bowing their heads to the floor.

† A chapter of the Koran.

Having . . . said this . . . the Sheikh hurried off to [wash] for the midday prayer, leaving Mohamed Weess seated on the ground in a daze, his legs completely incapable of bearing the weight of his body.

"Forty days," he muttered through a parched throat. "God give me strength!"

The village in which Mohamed Weess and Mohamed Sa'id lived was a small one and by evening everyone knew of Mohamed Weess's dream and of Sheikh Mohamed Sa'id's interpretation of it. The village was one whose people believed in the interpretation of dreams and so by the following evening everyone was firmly convinced that Mohamed Weess would be dead within forty days. Singly, then in groups, the men paid visits to Mohamed Weess; he was thus forced to keep to his house to receive those who came, in anticipation of his death. . . .

The womenfolk of Mohamed Weess's household came in search of news, casting telling glances at him. They found him in perfect health but with his features set in an abstracted air; mourning and wailing, they [cried to] God to intervene with the Angel of Death who was seeking to snatch him away while still as fit as ever. Though Mohamed Weess felt no pain or discomfort, the many [visits made] him [expect] pain and discomfort. He stuck it out for the first ten days and continued going and coming between his house and the cattle market. Soon, however, he was unable to hold out any longer; his nerves gave way and people began paying their visits to him during the daytime, whereas previously they had only found him at home in the evening.

Twenty days from the date of his dream Mohamed Weess . . . now remained in [his bed] night and day. When thirty days of the allotted period had passed, the various plates of his favorite foods, prepared specially for him by his family, [lay at] his bedside untouched. Dressed in an all-white garment and having let his beard grow, he spent his time in prayer. He wept, not from fear of death or in regret for life, but out of terror for the punishment that lay beyond the grave, and in dread lest God should not forgive him the many times he had taken His name in vain at the cattle market or had cheated the peasants from neighboring villages. As the days melted away, drawing nearer to the fateful fortieth, so the store of fat which surrounded Mohamed Weess's stomach, empty with hunger, melted away. . . . People—those of his own village and those from round about—talked of the spiritual glow that emanated from his face and of the mystical and mysterious phrases which fell from his lips as he [prayed]. Thirty-nine of the forty days passed, and on the evening of the thirty-ninth I made my appearance.

And who, you may well ask, am I?

I am the schoolmaster of the village in which Mohamed Weess works . . . at the cattle market and in which Sheikh Mohamed Sa'id is regarded as the holy man. I used to spend my summer vacations in Damascus [the capital of Syria,] and my return to the school coincided with the thirty-ninth day. . . . I was acquainted with Mohamed Weess in the same way as I knew all the [people] of the village and when Mohamed Atallah, the elderly school porter, informed me about him I was at a loss to know whether to laugh or feel sorry for him. I therefore set off with Mohamed Atallah to comfort him. . . .

The courtyard, usually filled with the livestock which Mohamed Weess bought from the market, was now crowded with people who had come to witness the slow creeping of death into his soul. In one corner were the men, in another the women, while in the third stood the sheep and goats which Mohamed Weess's friends had brought during his lifetime that they might be slaughtered on the [day of his death]. On entering the room in which Mohamed Weess awaited the Angel of Death, I found him—Mohamed Weess, not the Angel—seated on his bed in a corner praying, while Mohamed Sa'id sat in another corner reciting the Koran in rolling tones. I was struck by the change that had come over the face of the Mohamed Weess I had known: his rounded, ruddy face had become long and . . . pale. . . . There was no similarity between this saint of God whose whole face exuded a spiritual glow and that other Mohamed Weess whom I used to hear each morning under the school window swearing. . . . I had visited Mohamed Weess in a mood of skepticism and curiosity, but the extreme change that had come over him . . . persuaded me that he would in fact die on the morrow as fate had decreed. I was filled with anger as I listened to Sheikh Mohamed Sa'id loudly reciting the Koran and glancing sideways at me.

Between myself and this Sheikh, whose nature was compounded of simplicity, stupidity, and cunning, there existed an age-long [hate]. I fought against the . . . trickery with which he gained control of the souls of the ignorant villagers, while he never missed an opportunity to set them against me, accusing me of teaching blasphemy to my students and filling their minds with disobedience against God and His Prophet. His zeal in his attacks against me [were not] lessened on learning

What things in this picture are traditional? What things represent changes from the traditional way of life?

from people that I came of a family which traced back its ancestry to Zain al-Abidin, the grandson of the Prophet's son-in-law.[*] On the contrary he made this a justification for being hostile to me and used to say, "Look at this man, descended from Zain al-Abidin, who claims that the world turns round [by] itself; yet," he would say, "I put it to you, has ever any one of you seen the door of his house which was facing east suddenly turn to the west?"

I was, as I said, filled with anger on seeing Sheikh Mohamed Sa'id. I almost shouted out that he was a murderer, that he was killing Mohamed Weess with . . . the poison of [putting] in his mind the thought that he would die within forty days. I recollected, however, that I had never succeeded in getting the better of Mohamed Sa'id by being annoyed or angry, for he was always able to win over the village folk by [his] argument . . . that the earth did not turn. Had it ever happened that a villager had seen the door of his house facing toward the west after it had faced eastwards? [Therefore] the earth did not turn. God have mercy on him for his [anger] against me, and God, too, have mercy on Mohamed Weess should he remain under the crazy power of Sheikh Mohamed Sa'id till tomorrow morning. Heavy of heart with sorrow and anger, I went off to my room in the school building.

Mohamed Atallah, the school porter, woke me at dawn as I had asked. I had placed three prickly pears, brought with me from Damascus, under the water-jar which stood in the path of the cooling breeze. I took one of these and hurried off to Mohamed Weess's house. The courtyard was empty except for the sheep and goats awaiting their owner's death and so, in turn, their own. The women's quarters were lit up and a low sound of wailing issued forth. The door of Mohamed Weess's room was shut, so I glanced in through the closed window and saw that he was asleep, no doubt exhausted after his long night of praying in readiness for death. I knocked loudly several times, then pushed open the door shouting:

"Give praises to God, Mohamed Weess."

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[*] Descendants of the Prophet Mohammed are especially revered in the Middle East.

He started up from sleep in alarm. "What is it?" he cried.

"I'm Naji the teacher. Don't be afraid, Mohamed Weess, and listen to me."

I saw the tears trickling down Mohamed Weess's cheeks as he sat there tongue-tied with terror. Fearful that he would die of fright before hearing me out, I said:

"I have come to you because I have just been awakened by my ancestor Zain al-Abidin, God bless him, who said to me: 'Go to Mohamed Weess and tell him that God has tested him and found that he is a repentant servant of His. Give him this, one of the fruits of Paradise, and order him to pray with you and make two prostrations before the rising of the sun; in the first of the prostrations he should recite the *Sura* of *al-Nasr* and God will so extend his days that he shall live to see his children and his children's children.'"

Mohamed Weess swallowed. . . . It seemed to me that his brain had not taken in all I had said to him as he gazed at the prickly pear I held in my hand. (I was sure that no one in the village had ever seen a prickly pear before.) I peeled it and stuffed it in his mouth, inviting him to swallow it, seeds and all. I then dragged him to a corner of the room.

"Prepare for prayers, Mohamed Weess, before day breaks."

I prayed standing behind Mohamed Weess. We made two prostrations, during the first of which he recited the whole of the *Sura* of *al-Nasr*. Then I went back to the school to await daybreak.

Within an hour the whole village had heard the new story about Mohamed Weess. All those people who had filled the courtyard of Mohamed Weess's house yesterday were now crowding the schoolyard, all tumbling over themselves to learn how it was that my ancestor, Zain al-Abidin, had come to me bearing God's pardon for Mohamed Weess. At that moment I felt that here at last I had scored a decisive victory over Sheikh Mohamed Sa'id, for neither had Mohamed Weess died nor had the sheep and goats in his courtyard been slaughtered—they had been turned over to me, a present from Mohamed Weess's friends to that saint of God, schoolteacher Naji, the direct descendent of Zain al-Abidin!

But was it in fact a victory? In truth I am not sure. My doubts as to the value of this victory are increased by the fact that I have been unable to reduce by one single person the number of [religious people] who take part in communal prayers behind Sheikh Mohamed Sa'id; on the contrary, I have increased his congregation by one: the village teacher, which is to say myself! To preserve the honor of my forefather, about whom I had [invented] my dream, I [for the first time have] to attend in person behind Sheikh Mohamed Sa'id at all prayers!

The Life of Mohammed

Editor's Introduction: At the center of any discussion of modernization in the Middle East lies the question of the future role and form of the Moslem religion, Islam, which can be translated as "submission" or "resignation" to the will of God (Allah). Basic to the study of Islam as a religion and a way of life is the life of Mohammed, his role in narrating the word of Allah to his people, and the transcription of his narration into a holy book, the Koran.

It is important to understand that Moslems conceive of Mohammed as a man, not a god. According to Islamic belief, Moses and Jesus were also prophets of Allah, but their word was misunderstood by the peoples of the earth, and the resulting religions, Judaism and Christianity, though close to the truth, are in some respects in error. God needed a final prophet to clear up the remaining misunderstandings, and Mohammed was that prophet, the last and greatest of God's prophets.

To refer to the Moslem religion as Mohammedanism implies that Moslems "believe in" Mohammed as Christians believe in Christ. This would be a great heresy, for in Moslem eyes there is only one God, Allah, and Mohammed is only a man, although an exceptional one, who was chosen by God to be transmitter of His word. One of the misunderstandings that Allah needed to clear up, in fact, was the Christian belief in the trinity, the idea that God consists of three parts. According to the Koran, there is only one, unified God. He cannot be divided.

The following selection is based on many accounts of Mohammed's life. What similarities do you see between Mohammed's life and the life of Moses or of Jesus? What differences?

By Robert P. Pearson.

ONE OF THE MOST exciting periods in the history of the world began with the birth of Mohammed in A.D. 570. At the time of his birth there was no Arab nation as such, no religion called Islam, and no Koran. Yet within two hundred years Islam and the Arabs had created an empire reaching from Spain to India and established a religion that today is practiced by more than 700 million people, one fifth of mankind.

Prior to Mohammed's birth, each of the Arab tribes of the Arabian Peninsula was ruled independently, and throughout the peninsula a great many religions were practiced, including some that believed in more than one god as well as Judaism and Christianity. Whether he was a desert dweller or a trader of the town, no Arab had much trust in the members of other tribes, for all were loyal only to themselves and distrusted those who were not related to them by blood or religion.

Mohammed was born into a well-respected tribe charged with the duty of guarding the sacred shrine, the Kaaba, in the town of Mecca, a center for pilgrimages in pre-Islamic times. As Mohammed's father had died before his birth and his mother was ill, he was sent as an infant with a nurse to an oasis in the desert where it was hoped he would benefit from the pure desert air. On his mother's death six years later he returned to Mecca, where he was brought up by his grandfather and uncle.

Mohammed, like many town boys, became a merchant, and in his early twenties he was hired by a wealthy widow, Khadija, to lead a camel caravan loaded with goods to Syria for trading and selling. Mohammed's honesty, intelligence, and thrift in carrying out this venture impressed his employer, and, as the two came to know each other, they decided to marry.

Mohammed now had little need to spend his days earning money. Although illiterate, he turned more and more to philosophy and mysticism. Perhaps he had heard stories in the desert as a boy, or perhaps during his travels as a merchant he was exposed to many of the religions practiced by the various tribes of Arabia and Syria. His mind filled with different ideas and philosophies, Mohammed struggled to unify them in some way, to decide what to keep and what to reject, to know what was truth.

He frequently wandered off by himself, seeking seclusion and a place to meditate. His favorite spot was an isolated cave on Mount Hira, just outside of Mecca. Mohammed's meditations went on for years. Then one day when Mohammed was meditating inside his cave, the Angel Gabriel came to him and told him to "recite in the name of the Lord." The experience was so charged with emotion that, trembling all over, Mohammed returned home and asked his wife to cover him, for he feared that he was ill. But even as she was doing as he asked, a voice spoke within him saying, "O Thou, enwrapped in thy mantle, arise and warn." As the revelations continued Mohammed gradually became convinced of the terrifying task before him. He had been chosen by God to be His prophet and to reveal a creed, to be written down in a holy book, for His people and all mankind.

The message Mohammed received was clearly understandable: There is one God, Allah, and Mohammed is His prophet. God is the Creator of all things, and His will must be done. On Judgment Day He will be merciful to those who follow Him but merciless to those who follow false gods.

For years Mohammed had been a recluse, a quiet man of meditation and philosophy. At this point he probably did not foresee the degree to which he was to become a leader of men in a political as well as religious sense. But with the first revelation came the start of a vast unification process in which the tribes of Arabia would begin to see themselves as one people, a people destined to take the message of Allah as far as their horses and camels could carry them.

Mohammed's earliest converts were those closest to him, his wife and her cousin, his cousin Ali, and another relative, Abu Bakr. But from most others in Mecca Mohammed met scorn and ridicule, for the people were content to worship idols as before. Gradually, however, Mohammed gained converts, mostly from slaves and the lower classes. As his converts grew in number the controversy surrounding him grew more intense until it became dangerous to be a Moslem. When he received an invitation to settle in the near-by town of Medina, his mother's birthplace, Mohammed decided to move to this more friendly environment. With his followers, he evaded his enemies and successfully journeyed to Medina. Eight years later, Mohammed was to return to Mecca at the head of an army of thousands. This *hegira*, or flight, from Mecca in A.D. 622 was later declared to be the official starting point of the Moslem era, and in the Moslem calendar it is the year 1.

In Medina, Mohammed finally found a receptive climate for his teaching. As his converts grew rapidly, it was necessary for him to become a political and social leader as well as a religious one. And with so many enemies, it was soon necessary for him to become a military leader as well. Hearing of a richly loaded and heavily guarded caravan heading from Syria to Mecca, the city that had so recently forced him to leave, Mohammed and his followers decided to attack it. Mohammed explained to his followers that to weaken those who opposed the spread of God's word was a virtue, and that those of his men who fell in battle would be rewarded in heaven. Outnumbered three to one, Mohammed's men won a quick victory. The courage shown by Mohammed's soldiers and the decisiveness of the victory were seen by the people of Medina as signs that Allah was with them. With the Prophet leading, Islam had won its first military victory. It was no longer just a religious movement. It was a social and political one as well.

This victory also established the idea of the *jihad*, the holy war of the Moslems against unbelievers. To die in the cause of Islam became a great virtue, and the pleasures of heaven for true believers were stressed. Although Mohammed and his fledgling army were to suffer defeats in the future, Islam as an expansionist force was established.

As conflicts with both Jews and Christians increased in number, Islam became more and more distinctive from the other two monotheistic religions of Arabia. Friday was declared the Sabbath in Islam, and Mecca, the home of the sacred Kaaba stone, replaced Jerusalem as the holy city. Soon Islam became the religion of all the Arab tribes except Mohammed's own, the Quraysh, who lived in and around Mecca. It was clear to Mohammed that he had to return to the town of his birth. Mohammed, leading an army of thousands, triumphantly returned to Mecca, where he had all the pagan idols of his tribesmen smashed; the people of Mecca, giving in to an irresistible force, converted to Islam.

After the conquest of Mecca, Mohammed returned to Medina. With the nearby Arab tribes under his control, he next took to consolidating the total area, and in A.D. 631 he successfully completed peace treaties with the Christians to the west and the Jews to the south. He now was ready to spread the word of Islam to faraway tribes and other countries. The payment of a tax and the verbal profession of faith in Islam were enough to enlist a tribe under the rapidly spreading banner of Islam. Thus, on the eve of Mohammed's death, Arabia, which had never before been united, now extended to the borders of the Roman Empire in Palestine to the west, and Mohammed's messengers had established contact with the great Persian empire to the north and east.

Mohammed's last major action in the cause of Islam was to head the annual pilgrimage to Mecca from his home in Medina in A.D. 632. He died three months later at the age of sixty-two. All his life Mohammed lived simply and piously in the midst of his people. He left what material goods he had to the state, but his chief legacy was the collection of *surahs*, or chapters of the Koran, transcribed over the years as Mohammed had had each of his many revelations. These *surahs* were collected into a book during the reign of Mohammed's successor, Abu Bakr, the first caliph or leader of Islam, and were completed in the present-day form of the Koran during the reign of the second caliph, Omar.

Islam, as is revealed in the Koran, brought a whole new basis for the social organization of Arabia and what was to become the Arab Empire. For the first time, religion rather than blood ties became the organizing force of the Arabs. Henceforth there were only two kinds of people, the believers, who had seen the light, and the unbelievers, who lived in darkness. Once converted, all people were considered brothers: "Know ye that every Moslem is a brother to every other Moslem, and that ye are now one brotherhood." It was on this foundation that the spread of Islam was based. There was originally no religious hierarchy. All men were the same before God, and the leader in prayer and the leader of the state became the protector of the believers against the unbelievers.

It is easy to see how appealing this new religion was to the Arabs, for it was based on a belief in the fundamental equality of all men and a straightforward, simple religious code. Under Mohammed's successors, the caliphs of Islam, Islam continued its dramatic spread. Within the next century and a half, the horsemen of Islam swept across North Africa to the west, into Spain, and across Persia and Afghanistan to the east to the steppes of Russia and the gates of India. And in following centuries Islam continued to expand, to Indonesia and the Philippines, across the Sahara and into black Africa, and even across the water to America. Today from minarets all over the world one hears the profession of faith of one fifth of mankind: "*La ilaha illa-'llah; Mohammedun rasulu-llah*"—"There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is His prophet."

Letters on Islam

◆§*Editor's Introduction:* The Middle East is the cradle of three of the great religions of the world: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. These are all "revealed" religions, in which the word of God is given to a prophet and is written down in a holy book—the Torah for Jews, the New Testament for Christians, the Koran for Moslems—and all are monotheistic—based on the belief in a single God.

There are many other similarities among the three Middle Eastern religions. Many Old Testament stories appear in the Koran in identical or similar form. Adam, Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Joseph, Moses, David, Solomon, Job, Jonah, and others are all mentioned in both books. From the New Testament, John the Baptist, Jesus, and many others are mentioned. This and the fact that Jesus and Moses are considered prophets by Moslems makes Jews and Christians much closer to the Moslem faith than to Hindus and those who believe in more than one God.

To have no religion is much worse in Moslem eyes than to have the wrong religion. For this reason, Moslems are very skeptical of Communism and other systems that are based on a philosophy of godlessness.

The following letters examine the fundamental principles of Islam. These letters were written by a father, Mohammed Fadhel Jamali, who had been jailed in Iraq for political reasons, to his son Abbas, a university student in Lebanon. Notice the rather formal tone of the letters. Letters are usually more formal and

Mohammed Fadhel Jamali, *Letters on Islam* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), pp. 20–21, 39–41.

stylized in the Middle East than they are in the West. In addition, the father feels it his duty to give guidance to his son. In return the son is expected to pay due respect to his father and to obey his wishes.

What does Mohammed Fadhel mean when he says "Allah, the One and Only, the Allah of Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Mohammed"?

Baghdad,
March 25, 1961

Dear Abbas,

After presenting you my good greetings, I pray for your safety, success, and guidance.

I have not yet received a letter from you this week, but I am writing to you as usual.

My health is all right, praise to Allah. Your mother visited me with several relatives and friends every day of the blessed Feast.

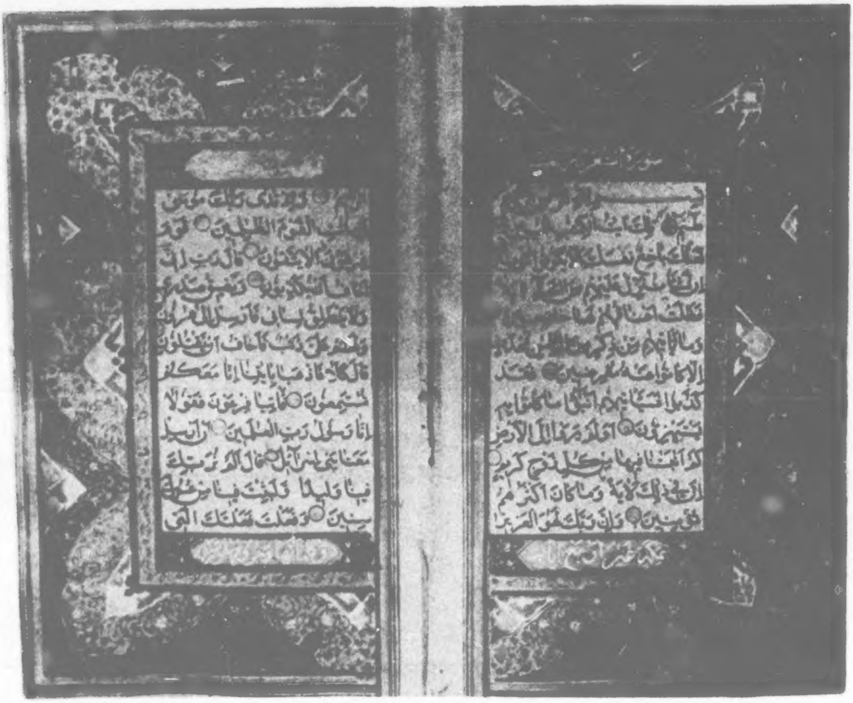
I have read again your letter dated February 11. In it you say: "What is religion? Let us take Islam as an example of a religion. . . ." I answer you with the following:

(1) I have already referred in a previous letter to what I think is the meaning of religious experience . . . and I told you that the highest stage which the spiritual evolution of man has reached is faith in Allah, the One and Only, the Allah of Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Mohammad, peace be on them. . . .

(2) Islam is clear and simple, easy to understand, and no two who are guided by Allah and whose hearts have been enlightened by the light of faith could disagree about it.

(3) Literally Islam means man's surrender of himself to Allah and his complete submission and resignation to the guidance of Allah. If man submits and surrenders to the will of Allah the Almighty, spiritually, intellectually, physically, and in action, then he is a Moslem in the literal sense.

(4) Legalistically a Moslem is one who says, "I witness [say publically] there is no Allah but Allah, and Mohammad is the messenger of Allah." On this all Moslems are agreed.



Because the representation of the human figure was forbidden in early Islam, calligraphy and design became highly developed, as can be seen in this hand-illustrated copy of the Koran.

(5) Realistically Islam is a divine order which directs the life of the Moslem in all its phases, spiritual, social, political and economic, for it consists of:

(a) a creed
(b) rituals
(c) a social order
(d) morality

I may describe the religion of Islam as a totalist religion.* . . . It differs from those religions which care for the spiritual aspects of man only and leave the physical and mundane [everyday] aspects. . . .

FADHEL

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* A religion which deals with everyday matters as well as spiritual matters.

Baghdad,
April 28, 1961

Dear Abbas,

I was greatly delighted with your letter of April 17. It brought to me memories of over thirty years ago when I used to pursue the subjects you are studying now. The study of philosophy is delightful indeed, but the important thing is that one should not forget the forest and who brought it into being while one is studying the tree. . . .

Today I am going to take up the rituals, which are usually called duties (*faraidh*), which are the acts which a Moslem must perform. They are acts intended to feed the soul. For, just as the body . . . grows with material food, so the soul . . . grows with worship. Worship makes man turn . . . to Allah . . . and dedicate his life to the service of Allah. If we liken the faith of a man to a tree, then worship is the water which irrigates the tree and the food which makes it grow. . . . If we liken faith to a building, then worship are the pillars upon which the building stands.

The duties of Islam consist of:

(1) Prayer
(2) Fasting (during the month of Ramadan)
(3) Tithing (giving money to the state and to the poor)
(4) Pilgrimage (to Mecca). . . .[*]

I am reading the Koran for the thirty-fifth time since entering the prison and every time I read it I discover wisdom and hidden things to which I had not been attentive in previous readings. The enjoyment of the blessings of the Koran requires persistence in reading it, and it also requires a good knowledge of the Arabic language, for the Koranic expression possesses beauty and grandeur which has not been approached. . . .

My greetings to those who ask about me.

Keep safe for your father. FADHEL

P.S. Today happens to be your birthday. I wish you a long life filled with goodness and happiness. FADHEL.

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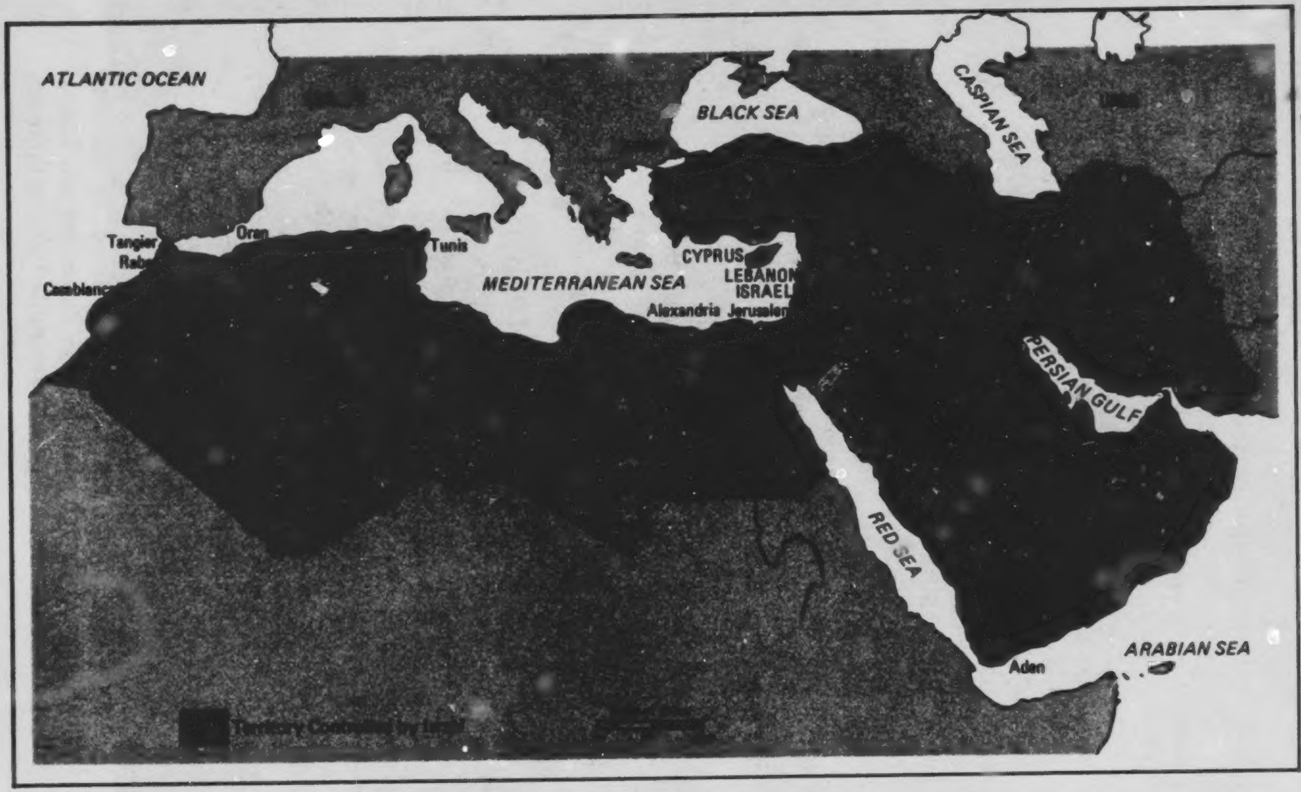
[*] There are usually five duties, or "pillars," listed. He leaves out the "profession of faith": There is no God but Allah and Mohammed is his Prophet (or the Messenger of God).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Tangier
Rabat
Casablanca
Oran
Tunis
CYPRUS
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
LEBANON
ISRAEL
Alexandria
Jerusalem
PERSIAN GULF
RED SEA
ARABIAN SEA
Aden
Territory Controlled by Islam

From Dixxie Allen Kohn, *The Middle East* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1944), p. 43. Reprinted by permission of the Oxford Book Company.

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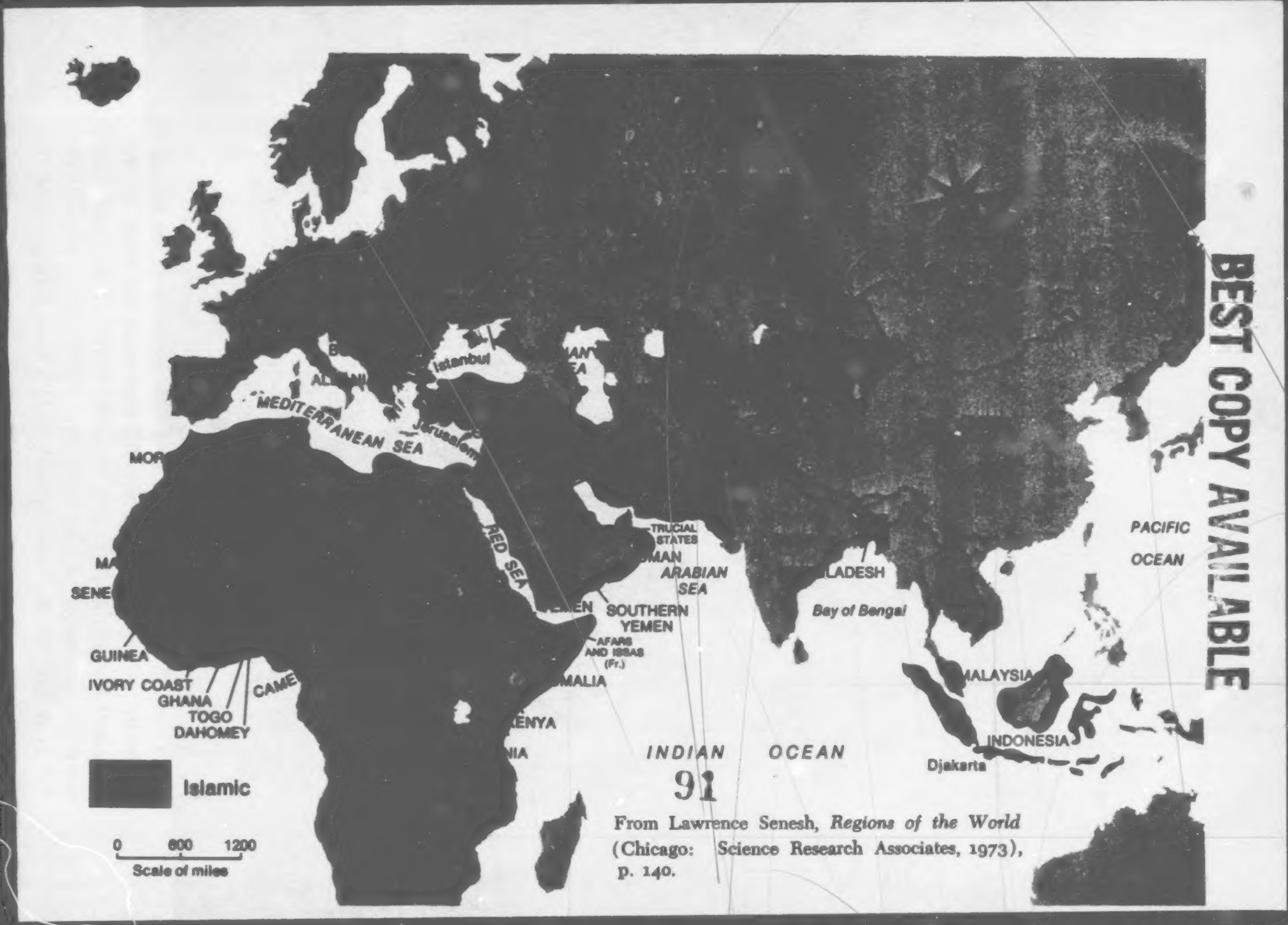
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KENYA
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TRUCIAL STATES
OMAN
ARABIAN SEA
LADESH
Bay of Bengal
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INDONESIA
Djakarta
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Scale of miles

From Lawrence Senesh, *Regions of the World* (Chicago: Science Research Associates, 1973), p. 140.

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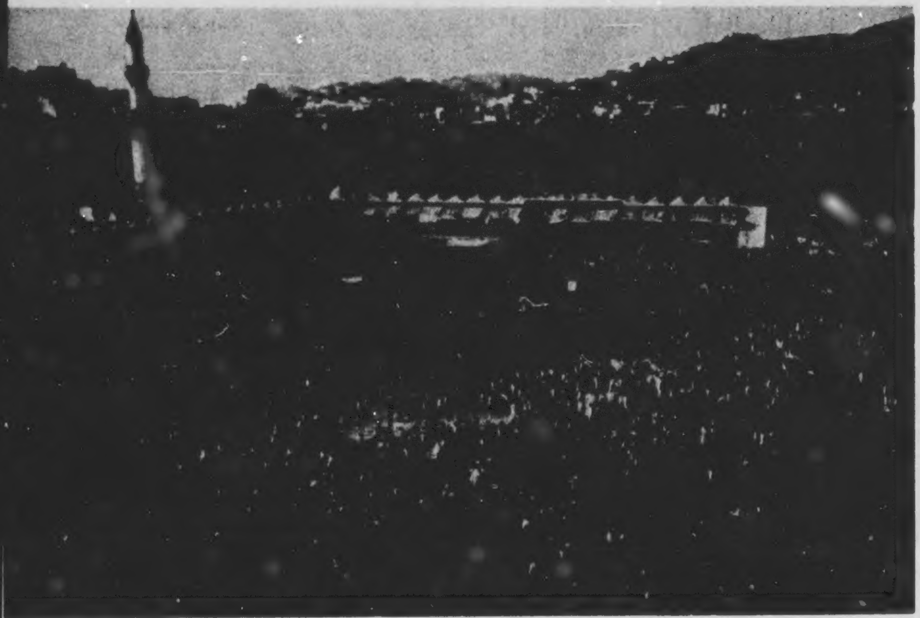

To symbolize their belief that all men are one before God, Moslems dress in simple white clothes while on the pilgrimage. Here they circle the Ka'ba, a house in the Great Mosque, which is the chief destination of the pilgrimage.

ing the dishes and cloth, they sat on the rug—a living room. Then they curl up and sleep on the rug—a bedroom. . . . Later in Mecca, I would see yet another use of the rug. When any kind of a dispute arose, someone who was respected highly and who was not involved would sit on a rug with the disputers around him, which made the rug a courtroom. In other instances it was a classroom.

Our tier [in the building where I was waiting for permission to go to Mecca] gave an excellent daylight view of the whole airport area. I stood at the railing, watching. Planes were landing and taking off like clockwork. Thousands upon thousands of people from all over the world made colorful patterns of movement. I saw groups leaving for Mecca, in buses, trucks, cars. I saw some setting out to walk the forty miles.

The Five Pillars of Islam

Editor's Introduction: As we have seen, Islam means submission to the will of God. In many Moslem countries there is no separation of church and state in an official sense, as there is in America. Islam thus permeates all aspects of a person's life. The writings of Islam, the Koran, the Shari'a (the legal system of Islam), and the *hadith* (the collected thoughts and sayings of Mohammed) together deal with all phases of existence.

In spite of these prescriptions, however, man still has freedom of action, for not everything a person does is punished or rewarded by God, according to the holy writings. Professor Abdulla Lutfiyya, at the American University of Beirut, states that there are four main categories of action in Islam: (1) lawful actions, those rewarded by God; (2) forbidden actions, those punished by God; (3) good actions, those that are good but not rewarded; and (4) bad actions, those that are bad but not punished by God. It is believed that two angels keep track of all these actions in order to determine whether or not a person will go to heaven.

There are five principal duties that a Moslem must perform: (1) making the initial public statement to the world that he is a Moslem, (2) praying toward Mecca five times a day, (3) giving money to the poor, (4) fasting during the month of Ramadan each year, (5) making the annual pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in his lifetime if it is within his means to do so. These duties are known as the five pillars of Islam. In the selection that follows, Philip Hitti, one of America's foremost scholars on Arab history, describes what these five essential duties entail. How do these duties compare to the ones your faith requires?

Philip Hitti, *The Arabs*, Gateway edition (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1949), pp. 47–52, 54.

THE ACTS of worship, or religious duties, of the Moslem center on the so-called five pillars of Islam.

The profession of faith, which is the first pillar, is summed up in the tremendous formula *la ilaha illa-'llah; Mohammedun rasulu-llah* ("There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is His prophet"). These are the first words to strike the ear of the newborn Moslem babe; they are the last to be uttered at the grave. And between birth and death no other words are more often repeated. They occur in the *muezzin*'s [crier's] call to prayer, chanted many times daily from the tops of [a mosque's] minarets. Islam has generally satisfied itself with only a verbal profession; once the formula is accepted and reproduced the person is . . . a Moslem.

Five times a day—dawn, midday, midafternoon, sunset, and nightfall—is the faithful Moslem supposed to turn his face toward Mecca and recite his prescribed prayer. Prayer is the second pillar of faith. A bird's-eye view of the Moslem world

The Friday noon prayer brings unity to Moslems and a sense of oneness before God.

at the hour of prayer would present the spectacle of a series of concentric circles of worshipers radiating from the Kaaba at Mecca and covering an ever-widening area from [West Africa to Indonesia and from Russia to South Africa].

The Friday noon prayer is the only public one and is obligatory for all adult males. . . . In dignity, simplicity, and orderliness it is unsurpassed as a form of collective worship. Standing erect in self-arranged rows in the mosque and following the leadership of the *imam* [the leader of the prayer] with precision and reverence, the worshipers present a sight that is always impressive. As a disciplinary measure this congregational prayer must have had great value for the proud, individualistic sons of the desert, developing in them a sense of social equality and a consciousness of solidarity. It promoted [a] brotherhood of believers. . . .

Almsgiving constitutes the third pillar of faith. It evolved into an obligatory tax on property. . . . Its exact amount varied, but generally it averaged 2½ percent. . . . Later, with the disintegration of the purely Islamic state, it was again left to the Moslem's conscience. . . .

Though . . . fasts are prescribed a number of times in the Koran, Ramadan as a fasting month is mentioned only once. Abstinence from all food and drink . . . is [required] from dawn till sunset during Ramadan. [This] became the fourth pillar.

Pilgrimage is the fifth and last pillar. Once in a lifetime every Moslem of either sex who can afford it is supposed to undertake at a stated time of the year a holy visit to Mecca. . . . Down through the ages this institution has continued to serve as the major unifying influence in Islam and the most effective common bond among the diverse believers. It [made] almost every capable Moslem . . . a traveler for once in his lifetime. The socializing influence of such a gathering of the brotherhood of believers from the four quarters of the earth is hard to overestimate. It afforded opportunity for Negroes, Berbers, Chinese, Persians, Syrians, Turks, Arabs—rich and poor, high and low—to fraternize and meet together on the common ground of faith. Of all world religions Islam seems to have attained the largest measure of success in demolishing the barriers of race, color, and nationality—at least within the confines of its own community. The line is drawn only between believers and the rest of mankind. These gatherings have undoubtedly contributed an important share toward the achievement of that result.

The Pilgrimage to Mecca

Editor's Introduction: As Hitti says, the pilgrimage or *Hajj* to Mecca is one of the most colorful and unifying institutions of Islam. People taking the trip to Mecca are honored beforehand by parties of rejoicing. On their return they are revered for their holiness and purity and given the title "Haji" meaning a holy one who has completed the *Hajj*. For those who cannot afford the trip to Mecca or who live too far away, numerous minor pilgrimages to local shrines are considered roughly equivalent. However, if at all possible, a once-in-a-lifetime trip to Mecca is obligatory.

The American black leader Malcolm X was a member of the Black Muslims, a group that turned to Islam as a religion and as a way of life. Malcolm X originally belonged to a Black Muslim group headed by Elijah Muhammed of Chicago, who believed that white men were devils and that black men, after centuries of oppression, would rise again to the glory that had once been theirs.

Though their creed differs in many respects from orthodox Islam—for example, in their belief that the races should be separate—the Black Muslims in America share with Middle Eastern Moslems a belief in Allah, an abhorrence of alcoholic beverages, and an emphasis on the virtue of cleanliness. The Black Muslims in America have thus been able to reform a large number of drug pushers and alcoholics who, under their influence, have gone straight and worked, like Malcolm, for the betterment of black people in America. A central tenet of the Black Muslim sect is

Malcolm X, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. Copyright © 1964 by Alex Haley and Malcolm X. Reprinted by permission of Grove Press, Inc.

the separation of the races, with the final goal the creation of a separate black state in America.

In the selection that follows, from *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, we see the process of conversion from the Black Muslim sect to orthodox Islam, as practiced in the Middle East, that took place when Malcolm X took the *Hajj* to Mecca. For the first time in his life, Malcolm X found himself treated as an equal by whites. As a result of this experience and his exposure to orthodox Islam, he began to doubt many of the beliefs of the Black Muslims who followed Elijah Muhammed. On his return to the United States he started a reformed Moslem sect based on orthodox Islamic principles. Soon thereafter he was assassinated, presumably by a member of Elijah Muhammed's group. The United States now contains two major Moslem groups, the Black Muslims of Elijah Muhammed and the followers of Malcolm X, known as Sunni Moslems.

The selection from Malcolm X's autobiography shows the tremendous impact of the *Hajj* on all the Moslem pilgrims who go to Mecca. What does the *Hajj* mean to Malcolm X? What function does it play in Islam?❧

ALLAH ALWAYS GIVES you signs, when you are with Him, that He is with you.

When I applied for a visa to Mecca at the Saudi Arabian Consulate, the Saudi Ambassador told me that no Muslim converted in America could have a visa for the Hajj pilgrimage without the signed approval of Dr. Mahmoud Shawarbi. But that was only the beginning of the sign from Allah. When I telephoned Dr. Shawarbi, he registered astonishment. "I was just going to get in touch with you," he said, "by all means come right over."

When I got to his office, Dr. Shawarbi handed me the signed letter approving me to make the Hajj to Mecca, and then a book. It was *The Eternal Message of Muhammad* by Abd ar-Rahman Azzam.

The author had just sent the copy of the book to be given to me, Dr. Shawarbi said, and he explained that this author was an Egyptian-born Saudi citizen, an international statesman, and one of the closest advisors of Prince Faisal, the ruler of Arabia. "He has followed you in the press very closely." It was hard for me to believe.

Dr. Shawarbi gave me the telephone number of his son, Muhammad Shawarbi, a student in Cairo, and also the number of the author's son, Omar Azzam, who lived in Jedda, "your last stop before Mecca. Call them both, by all means." . . .

The Cairo airport was where scores of Hajj groups were becoming *Muhrim*, pilgrims, upon entering the state of Ihram, the assumption of a spiritual and physical state of consecration. . . .

Driving to the airport with our Hajj group, I began to get nervous, knowing that from there in, it was going to be watching others who knew what they were doing, and trying to do what they did.

Entering the state of Ihram, we took off our clothes and put on two white towels. One, the *Izar*, was folded around the loins. The other, the *Rida*, was thrown over the neck and shoulders, leaving the right shoulder and arm bare. A pair of simple sandals, the *na'l*, left the ankle-bones bare. Over the *Izar* waist-wrapper, a money belt was worn, and a bag, something like a woman's big handbag, with a long strap, was for carrying the passport and other valuable papers, such as the letter I had from Dr. Shawarbi.

Every one of the thousands at the airport, about to leave for Jedda, was dressed this way. You could be a king or a peasant and no one would know. Some powerful personages, who were discreetly pointed out to me, had on the same thing I had on. Once thus dressed, we all had begun intermittently calling out "*Labbayka! Labbayka!*" ("Here I come, O Lord!") The airport sounded with the din of *Muhrim* expressing their intention to perform the journey of the Hajj.

Planeloads of pilgrims were taking off every few minutes, but the airport was jammed with more, and their friends and relatives waiting to see them off. Those not going were asking others to pray for them at Mecca. We were on our plane, in the air, when I learned for the first time that with the crush, there was not supposed to have been space for me, but strings had been pulled, and someone had been put off because they didn't want to disappoint an American Muslim. I felt mingled emotions of regret that I had inconvenienced and discomfited whoever was bumped off the plane for me, and, with that, an utter humility and gratefulness that I had been paid such an honor and respect.

Packed in the plane were white, black, brown, red, and yellow people, blue eyes and blond hair, and my kinky red hair—all together, brothers! All honoring the same God Allah, all in turn giving equal honor to each other.

From some in our group, the word was spreading from seat to seat that I was a Muslim from America. Faces turned, smiling toward me in greeting. A box lunch was passed out and as we ate that, the word that a Muslim from America was aboard got up into the cockpit.

The captain of the plane came back to meet me. He was an Egyptian, his complexion was darker than mine; he could have walked in Harlem and no one would have given him a second glance. He was delighted to meet an American Muslim. When he invited me to visit the cockpit, I jumped at the chance.

The co-pilot was darker than he was. I can't tell you the feeling it gave me. I had never seen a black man flying a jet. That instrument panel: no one ever could know what all of those dials meant! Both of the pilots were smiling at me, treating me with the same honor and respect I had received ever since I left America. I stood there looking through the glass at the sky ahead of us. In America, I had ridden in more planes than probably any other Negro, and I never had been invited up into the cockpit. And there I was, with two Muslim seatmates, one from Egypt, the other from Arabia, all of us bound for Mecca, with me up in the pilots' cabin. Brother, I *knew* Allah was with me.

I got back to my seat. All of the way, about an hour's flight, we pilgrims were loudly crying out, *"Labbayka! Labbayka!"* The plane landed at Jedda. It's a seaport town on the Red Sea, the arrival or disembarkation point for all pilgrims who come to Arabia to go to Mecca. Mecca is about forty miles to the east, inland.

The Jedda airport seemed even more crowded than Cairo's had been. Our party became another shuffling unit in the shifting mass with every race on earth represented. Each party was making its way toward the long line waiting to go through Customs. [When] the clerk saw that I was handing him an American passport . . . he held it, he looked at me and said something in Arabic. My friends around me began speaking rapid Arabic, gesturing and pointing, trying to intercede for me. The judge asked me in English for my letter from Dr. Shawarbi, and he thrust it at the clerk, who read it. He gave the letter back, protesting—I could tell that. An argument was going on, *about* me. I felt like a stupid fool, unable to say a word, I couldn't even understand what was being said. But, finally, sadly, the judge turned to me.

I had to go before the *Mahgama Sharia*, he explained. It was the Muslim high court which examined all possibly non-authentic converts to the Islamic religion seeking to enter Mecca. It was absolute that no non-Muslim could enter Mecca. . . .

Right outside the airport was a mosque, and above the airport was a huge, dormitory-like building, four tiers high. It was semi-dark, not long before dawn, and planes were regularly taking off and landing, their landing lights sweeping the runways, or their wing and tail lights blinking in the sky. Pilgrims from Ghana, Indonesia, Japan, and Russia, to mention some, were moving to and from the dormitory where I was being taken. I don't believe that motion picture cameras ever have filmed a human spectacle more colorful than my eyes took in. We reached the dormitory and began climbing, up to the fourth, top, tier, passing members of every race on earth. Chinese, Indonesians, Afghanistanians. Many, not yet changed into the *Ihram* garb, still wore their national dress. It was like pages out of the *National Geographic* magazine. . . .

As the sleeping Muslims woke up, when dawn had broken, they almost instantly became aware of me, and we watched each other while they went about their business. I began to see what an important role the rug played in the overall cultural life of the Muslims. Each individual had a small prayer rug, and each man and wife, or large group, had a larger communal rug. These Muslims prayed on their rugs there in the compartment. Then they spread a tablecloth over the rug and ate, so the rug became the dining room. Remov-

I wished that I could start walking. At least, I knew how to do that. . . .

I had just said my Sunset Prayer, *El Maghrib;* I was lying on my cot in the fourth-tier compartment, feeling blue and alone, when out of the darkness came a sudden light. . . .

In a matter of a few minutes I was downstairs and rushing to where I had seen . . . four officials. One of them spoke functional English. I excitedly showed him the letter from Dr. Shawarbi. He read it. Then he read it aloud to the other three officials. "A Muslim from America!" I could almost see it capture their imaginations and curiosity. They were very impressed. I asked the English-speaking one if he would please do me the favor of telephoning Dr. Omar Azzam at the number I had. He was glad to do it. He got someone on the phone and conversed in Arabic.

Dr. Omar Azzam came straight to the airport. With the four officials beaming, he wrung my hand in welcome, a young, tall, powerfully built man. I'd say he was six foot three. He had an extremely polished manner. In America, he would have been called a white man, but—it struck me, hard and instantly—from the way he acted, I had no *feeling* of him being a white man. "Why didn't you call before?" he demanded of me. He showed some identification to the four officials, and he used their phone. Speaking in Arabic, he was talking with some airport officials. "Come!" he said.

In something less than half an hour, he had gotten me released, my suitcase and passport had been retrieved from Customs, and we were in Dr. Azzam's car, driving through the city of Jedda, with me dressed in the *Ihram* two towels and sandals. I was speechless at the man's attitude, and at my own physical feeling of no difference between us as human beings. I had heard for years of Muslim hospitality, but one couldn't quite imagine such warmth. . . .

That [next] morning was when I first began to reappraise the "white man." It was when I first began to perceive that "white man," as commonly used, means complexion only secondarily; primarily it described attitudes and actions. In America, "white man" meant specific attitudes and actions toward the black man, and toward all other non-white men. But in the Muslim world, I had seen that men with white complexions were more genuinely brotherly than anyone else had ever been.

That morning was the start of a radical alteration in my whole outlook about "white" men. . . .

The Azzam family were very elated that I was qualified and accepted to go to Mecca. I had lunch at the Jedda Palace. Then I slept again for several hours, until the telephone awakened me.

It was Muhmmad Abdul Azziz Maged, the Deputy Chief of Protocol for Prince Faisal. "A special car will be waiting to take you to Mecca, right after your dinner," he told me. He advised me to eat heartily, as the Hajj rituals require plenty of strength.

I was beyond astonishment by then.

Two young Arabs accompanied me to Mecca. A well-lighted, modern turnpike highway made the trip easy. Guards at intervals along the way took one look at the car, and the driver made a sign, and we were passed through, never even having to slow down. I was, all at once, thrilled, important, humble, and thankful.

Mecca, when we entered, seemed as ancient as time itself. Our car slowed through the winding streets, lined by shops on both sides and with buses, cars, and trucks, and tens of thousands of pilgrims from all over the earth were everywhere.

The car halted briefly at a place where a *Mutawaf* [guide] was waiting for me. He wore the white skullcap and long nightshirt garb that I had seen at the airport. He was a short, dark-skinned Arab, named Muhammad. He spoke no English whatever.

We parked near the Great Mosque. We performed our ablution and entered. Pilgrims seemed to be on top of each other, there were so many, lying, sitting, sleeping, praying, walking.

My vocabulary cannot describe the new mosque that was being built around the Ka'ba. I was thrilled to realize that it was only one of the tremendous rebuilding tasks under the direction of young Dr. Azzam, who had just been my host. The Great Mosque of Mecca, when it is finished, will surpass the architectural beauty of India's Taj Mahal.

Carrying my sandals, I followed the *Mutawaf*. Then I saw the Ka'ba, a huge black stone house in the middle of the Great Mosque. It was being circumambulated by thousands upon thousands of praying pilgrims, both sexes, and every size, shape, color, and race in the world. I knew the prayer to be uttered when the pilgrim's eyes first perceive the Ka'ba. Translated, it is "O God, You are peace, and peace derives from You. So greet us, O Lord, with peace." Upon entering the Mosque, the pilgrim should try to kiss the Ka'ba if possible, but if the crowds prevent him getting that close, he touches it, and if the crowds prevent that, he raises his hand and cries out "Takbir!" ("God is great!") I could not get within yards. "Takbir!"

My feeling there in the House of God was a numbness. My *Mutawaf* led me in the crowd of praying, chanting pilgrims, moving seven times around the Ka'ba. Some were bent and wizened with age; it was a sight that stamped itself on the brain. I saw incapacitated pilgrims being carried by others. Faces were enraptured in their faith. The seventh time around, I prayed two *Rak'a*, prostrating myself, my head on the floor. The first prostration, I prayed the Quran verse "Say He is God, the one and only"; the second prostration: "Say O you who are unbelievers, I worship not that which you worship. . . ."

The *Mutawaf* and I next drank water from the well of Zem Zem. Then we ran between the two hills, Safa and Marwah, where Hagar wandered over the same earth searching for water for her child Ishmael.

Three separate times, after that, I visited the Great Mosque and circumambulated the Ka'ba. The next day we set out after sunrise toward Mount Arafat, thousands of us, crying in unison: "Labbayka! Labbayka!" and "Allah Akbar!" Mecca is surrounded by the crudest-looking mountains I have ever seen; they seem to be made of the slag from a blast furnace. No vegetation is on them at all. Arriving about noon, we prayed and chanted from noon until sunset, and the *asr* (afternoon) and *Maghrib* (sunset) special prayers were performed.

Finally, we lifted our hands in prayer and thanksgiving, repeating Allah's words: "There is no God but Allah. He has no partner. His are authority and praise. Good emanates from Him, and He has power over all things."

one religion that erases from its society the race problem. Throughout my travels in the Muslim world, I have met, talked to, and even eaten with people who in America would have been considered "white"—but the "white" attitude was removed from their minds by the religion of Islam. I have never before seen *sincere* and *true* brotherhood practiced by all colors together, irrespective of their color.

"You may be shocked by these words coming from me. But on this pilgrimage, what I have seen, and experienced, has forced me to *re-arrange* much of my thought-patterns previously held, and to *toss aside* some of my previous conclusions. . . .

"During the past eleven days here in the Muslim world, I have eaten from the same plate, drunk from the same glass, and slept in the same bed (or on the same rug)—while praying to the *same God*—with fellow Muslims, whose eyes were the bluest of blue, whose hair was the blondest of blond, and whose skin was the whitest of white. And in the *words* and in the *actions* and in the *deeds* of the "white" Muslims, I felt the same sincerity that I felt among the black African Muslims of Nigeria, Sudan, and Ghana.

"We were *truly* all the same (brothers)—because their belief in one God had removed the "white" from their minds, the "white" from their *behavior*, and the "white" from their *attitude*.

"I could see from this, that perhaps if white Americans could accept the Oneness of God, then perhaps, too, they could accept *in reality* the Oneness of Man—and cease to measure, and hinder, and harm others in terms of their "differences" in color. . . .

"All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of all the Worlds.

Sincerely,
EL-HAJJ MALIK EL-SHABAZZ
(MALCOLM X)"

"If God Wills It"

Fear not the man who fears God.
—Arab proverb

◆ *Editor's Introduction:* Though many Moslems in the Middle East, like many Christians in America, do not keep the duties of their faith perfectly, religion is a more important part of everyday life in the Middle East than it is in the United States. It exerts a great influence over the behavior of most people, and it can be said that the average person's philosophy of life is a religious one.

The following selection examines the way in which Islam permeates everyday life in a village. The author, a professor at the American University of Beirut, Lebanon, feels that the main characteristics of the villager's philosophy of life are a feeling of dependency on God, fear of God's punishment on earth and after death and a deep-seated respect for tradition and the past. In addition, the villager is traditionally polite and generous to all.

Though Professor Lutfiyya studied a traditional village in Jordan, much of what he says pertains to city dwellers as well. How is faith in God's will a comfort to the people of Baytin? Why do people in Baytin respect their traditions so much? Why are old people so respected? ◆

From Abdulla Lutfiyya, *Baytin: A Jordanian Village* (Loren, Holland: Edicom, N.V., 1966). By permission of the publisher.

very question. "My God! How can you say such a thing?" gasped the shepherd. "How can I . . . I cannot . . . a poor villager . . . master of the whole world."

The Chief . . . made . . . reply to this question with another question: "I am hardly able to manage a village, how shall I manage Turkey?". . . . When the Grocer's turn came, he did not wait. . . . As president of Turkey, he said: "I would make roads for the villagers to come to towns to see the world and would not let them stay in their holes all their life."

To get out of his hole the Grocer even declared himself ready—and in this he was quite alone in Balgat—to live outside of Turkey. This came out when Tosun asked another of his projective questions: "If you could not live in Turkey, where would you want to live?" The standard reply of the villagers was that they would not live, could not imagine living, anywhere else. The forced choice simply was ignored.

When Tosun persisted ("Suppose you had to leave Turkey?") he teased an extreme reaction out of some Balgati. The shepherd, like several other wholly routinized personalities, finally replied that he would rather kill himself. The . . . peasant can more easily imagine destroying the self than relocating it in an unknown, i.e., frightful, setting.

The Chief again responded with the clear and confident voice of traditional man. "Nowhere," he said. "I was born here, grew old here, and hope God will permit me to die here." To Tosun's probe, the Chief replied firmly: "I wouldn't move a foot from here." Only the Grocer found no trouble in imagining himself outside of Turkey, living in a strange land. Indeed he seemed fully prepared, as a man does when he has already posed a question to himself many times. "America," said the Grocer, and, without waiting for Tosun to ask him why, stated his reason: "Because I have heard that it is a nice country, and with possibilities to be rich even for the simplest persons."

Tosun had been instructed to ask each person whether others ever came to him for advice, and if so what they wanted advice about. Naturally, the Balgati whose advice was most sought was the Chief, who reported: "Yes, that is my main duty, to give advice." (Tosun: "What about?") "About all that I or you could imagine, even about their wives and how to handle them, and how to cure their sick cow."

Standing on Mount Arafat had concluded the essential rites of being a pilgrim to Mecca. No one who missed it could consider himself a pilgrim. . . .

About twenty of us Muslims who had finished the Hajj were sitting in a huge tent on Mount Arafat. As a Muslim from America, I was the center of attention. They asked me what about the Hajj had impressed me the most. One of the several who spoke English asked; they translated my answers for the others. My answer to that question was not the one they expected, but it drove home my point.

I said, "The *brotherhood!* The people of all races, colors, from all over the world coming together as *one!* It has proved to me the power of the One God." . . .

The *color-blindness* of the Muslim world's religious society and the *color-blindness* of the Muslim world's human society: these two influences had each day been making a greater impact, and an increasing persuasion against my previous way of thinking. . . .

Here is what I wrote . . . from my heart:

"Never have I witnessed such sincere hospitality and the overwhelming spirit of true brotherhood as is practiced by people of all colors and races here in this Ancient Holy Land, the home of Abraham, Muhammad, and all the other prophets of the Holy Scriptures. For the past week, I have been utterly speechless and spellbound by the graciousness I see displayed all around me by people *of all colors.*

"I have been blessed to visit the Holy City of Mecca. I have made my seven circuits around the Ka'ba, led by a young *Mutawaf* named Muhammad. I drank water from the well of Zem Zem. I ran seven times back and forth between the hills of Mt. Al-Safa and Al-Marwah. I have prayed in the ancient city of Mina, and I have prayed on Mt. Arafat.

"There were tens of thousands of pilgrims, from all over the world. They were of all colors, from blue-eyed blonds to black-skinned Africans. But we were all participating in the same ritual, displaying a spirit of unity and brotherhood that my experiences in America had led me to believe never could exist between the white and the non-white.

"America needs to understand Islam, because this is the

DEPENDENCY ON GOD

"IN SHA'A ALLAH," or . . . "if God wills it," looms large in the thinking of the average inhabitant of Baytin. Implicit in this saying is the fatalism which is characteristic of most villagers. One hears this phrase repeated constantly. A visitor may ask a villager: "Are you going to send your son to school next year?" The inevitable answer is: "In sha'a Allah." No further explanation is added or needed. One is apt to hear a mother telling her son who is on his way to school: "If God wills it, you will succeed in passing your examination today." His reply then would be: "If God wills it."

If a villager loses something of value, he does not stop to examine the causes for the loss but merely sighs philosophically, "*Haththi mashi 'atu Allah,*" or "This is the will of God." Friends who come around to offer sympathy merely reinforce this belief by repeating the same saying. The author recalls once listening to an old man telling another villager who had just lost his sick cow, the only property he had, "This is the will of Allah. By taking your cow, Allah has tested your faith. Be thankful to Allah and you may be given a better cow." "You are right," replied the second villager, "this is *mashi 'atu Allah*, there is no god but He, and let Him be praised in all circumstances." . . .

Every villager utters certain traditional sayings several times each day to invoke the blessing of God. When he begins a task, he says aloud that he is doing it "in the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate." When he has finished, he offers his "thanks to God the Lord of all people" for enabling him to complete the job.

If a villager receives some aid in accomplishing a certain task, he thanks his helper by telling him, "May God pay you (*hasanat*) for the work you have done for me." The helper then answers: "Samahak Allah," or "May the Lord forgive you (for me)." If the villager simply uses the phrase "thank you" to his helper, the helper reminds him, "Let your thanks be to God (*al-shakru li-Allah*) for He is the one who caused me to help you."

FEAR OF GOD'S PUNISHMENT

The Muslim villager, as noted above, feels that God keeps a very close watch over him. God is interested in his everyday behavior; he will be punished for his "bad" acts, and rewarded for his "good." Consequently, before the villager will commit a sin or undertake a move which might be construed as sinful, he asks himself the question: "Would God be pleased or displeased with my behavior?" If he proceeds to commit the sin, he lives in fear of God's punishment and hopes that he might appease Allah by repentance and doing good deeds in the future. . . .

In another case where a family lost its wealth, villagers were quick to point out that the family fortune had been acquired in a dishonest way in the first place. . . .

If a villager suffers misfortune but cannot attribute it to any sin or wrong doing, he is apt to ask: "God, what have I done wrong that you should punish me?" Such an attitude is evident in the remarks made by parents who are mistreated by their offspring.

[A] simple conversation between two friends might run as follows:

> "Have you seen my son Ahmad today?"
>
> "Wa-Allahi [by God] no."
>
> "We have been looking for him all day. Wa-Allahi we do not know where he has gone."
>
> "What seems to be wrong with him? Wa-Allahi he strikes me as a good boy."
>
> "Wa-Allahi we do not know. He asked us to buy him a bicycle last night, and we said no. This morning he disappeared. Wa-Allahi we do not know where he has gone!"
>
> "That's it. If you don't get them what they want they get angry with you. Wa-n-Nabi [by the Prophet], children these days need a big stick to be broken on their backs. Wa-Allahi al-ghazim [by God the greatest] if I were in your place I wouldn't look for him. When he gets hungry, he'll go home. Come, let me buy you a cup of coffee."
>
> "May God heap his abundance upon you. Wa-Allahi one's heart does not leave him [from worrying in such a case]. I'd better look for him."

"May the Lord accompany you [in your search]."
"And [may he be] with you." . . .

The villager often tries to appease God and to avoid His punishment by vowing to offer Him a *dahiyya*, or a sacrifice. Sacrifices are also offered on behalf of a dead relative. This is done with the hope that the sacrifice will please God. . . .

A DEEP-SEATED RESPECT FOR TRADITION AND THE PAST

Muslims are taught to look to the [Koran] for inspiration and guidance in whatever they do. This holy book is said to be the most complete source of truth and wisdom. But Islam also sanctions traditional behavior and gives it precedence over innovations . . . "[A]nything of the past has precedence [over innovations]." . . .

There is a constant yearning to get back to "the good old days." Innovators are always the objects of shame and ridicule. Invariably there is an outright rejection of anything new that appears to conflict with tradition. There is always a deep respect reserved for the aged, and a heavy reliance upon sayings and proverbs in everyday conversation. . . .

The villagers are taught from childhood to show great respect for their elders. Children are often instructed to kiss the hands of older people when they are introduced to them, to be polite in the presence of elders, and to stand up and offer them their seats. They are to remain standing until the older folks are all seated. Young people are encouraged to listen to and learn from their elders. Only from older people who have lived in the past can one learn anything of value, they are told. The wisdom of the elders is seldom questioned. If one deviates from this norm and dares to challenge the ideas of an older person, he is put in his place immediately by the latter, who tells him: "How would you know that? You were only born yesterday."

POLITENESS AND GENEROSITY

. . . The filial piety demanded and expected of all Muslims . . . is considered a religious duty. Ill-treatment of parents or disobedience to them constitutes a sin. The child is considered to owe his parents a great debt for bringing him up. . . .

Children, on the whole, are very obedient to their parents. Only the most impolite child dares to cross his legs, smoke, or utter profanity in the presence of his parents. No child dares to sit down while his father is still standing, or to start eating before his father. The polite child faces his parents with utter humility. He does not talk back if rebuked, or raise his hand in retaliation if struck. . . .

This complete obedience to parents does not end at an early age. It continues even after the child is married and lives away from his father and mother. . . .

Tradition and religion combine to instruct the villager on how to be a good relative and neighbor. Every one is expected to visit his neighbors and relatives at their homes on religious holidays. . . .

The etiquette of greeting and salutations is also highly formalized. When villagers meet in the street, the young must invariably greet the old first out of respect. Upon entering a house, the guest is required to give it his blessing. . . .

The villagers often quote a saying that runs: "If guests do not enter a house, angels do not enter it." This is their way of indicating that such a house is not blessed by God. In view of this traditional understanding, the villager usually puts aside any work that he might be doing for the moment, regardless of how pressing the work might be, in order to welcome any guests. . . . He then shakes hands with each guest several times. The guests are then led into the house, offered the best seats, and every effort is made to provide for their comfort. A cool reception in [the] eyes of the villagers is considered bad taste and reflects bad manners.

The host feels it his duty to make the guest feel welcome. He will say that he is delighted and honored by the visit and inquire why his guest has not visited more often. The host will do everything in his power to give [the] impression that he has no work to do, so as to spare his guest the feeling that he may be imposing. For fear that his guest might feel lonely, the host will not leave him alone except under very unusual circumstances.

The ritual of hospitality commences by offering coffee to the guest immediately after his arrival. The guest accepts the coffee readily because it would be an insult to his host to reject it. . . .

The first [offer] of hospitality is followed by offering food to the guest. The guest shows more restraint when food is brought. He politely tells his host that he is full and at the moment has no desire to eat. He further volunteers the information, whether or not it be true, that he has eaten very recently. The host on the other hand, will appear very apologetic for the simplicity of the food he has to offer. But he will insist that his guest partake of all the food he desires.

The guest will be served the very best of food as long as he remains. . . .

Editor's Postscript: Many Middle Easterners believe that much or all of what happens in the world is the result of God's will. This belief does not necessarily conflict with the idea of free will as described in the following excerpt.

> People ask me if I believe in Fate—Kismet.
>
> Suppose you are on board a ship, a very enormous ship. In that ship you may do as you please. You may sleep, wake, eat, bathe, play, walk in the way that you wish to. You may go where you wish to go. But there is one limit to your freedom. If you go too far you are lost in the sea. To me Kismet is like that. There is freedom, liberty, room for initiative; but each of us is placed on a certain ship, and the ship we are placed on determines our limits. . . .
>
> When we pray we must ask God to help us to do the things that are our particular destiny.*

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* Najmeh Najafi and Helen Hinckley, *Persia Is My Heart*, Harper and Bros. New York, 1953.

The Grocer and the Chief

Editor's Introduction: As we have seen, the traditions in the Middle East are strong and have served an important function in the lives of the people. As long as the culture remained relatively stable, the tried and tested ways of the past were useful in preserving a sense of security. However, as technological changes began to take hold in the Middle East, along with new ideas from cultures outside the area, the old ways began to give way to new ways, and new values began to take root. The process of modernization is complex, and no one is quite sure how to measure it. Nor is there agreement on which aspects of modernization are good and which are bad. Industrialization, for example, is usually considered an important part of the modernization process, yet we all suffer from the effects of pollution, a by-product of industrialization. Modernization, then, is a mixed blessing leading to a better society in some ways but not in others.

During the modernization process attitudes, values, and behavior change. Old ideas are modified, and new ways of doing things become accepted. A man whose mother was housebound and wore the veil all her life may send his daughter to college. A girl may break tradition and insist that she, not her parents, should be the one to choose her husband. Such alteration in behavior and values are characteristic of social change.

In the following selection, the process of social change is symbolized by two characters, the grocer and the chief. The author is an American scholar who has studied social change in the Middle

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East by using trained local interviewers to ask identical questions of sample groups of people in several Middle Eastern countries. The selection describes two visits four years apart to the same village in Turkey by different interviewers. How would you compare the chief's values and the grocer's values? Is either man "better" than the other? Why or why not? ❧

THE VILLAGE OF BALGAT lies about eight kilometers [5 miles] out of Ankara [the capital], in the southerly direction. It does not show on the standard maps and it does not figure in the standard histories. I first heard of it in the autumn of 1950 and most Turks have not heard of it today. Yet the story of the Middle East today is encapsulated in the recent career of Balgat. Indeed, the personal meaning of modernization in underdeveloped lands can be traced, in miniature, through the lives of two Balgatli—The Grocer and The Chief. . . .

The Chief was a man of few words on many subjects. . . . He was also a man of many words on a few subjects. . . . Only when the issues involved first principles of conduct did he consider the occasion appropriate for pronouncing judgment. . . .

The Chief has so little trouble with the first principles because he desires to be, and usually is [the spokesman for] traditional Turkish virtues. His themes are obedience, courage, loyalty—the classic values. . . . For the daily round of village life these are adequate . . . and as the Chief has been outside of his village only to fight in two wars he has never found his austere code wanting. . . . When [Tosun, the interviewer,] asked what he wished for his two grown sons, for example, the Chief replied promptly: "I hope they will fight as bravely as we fought and know how to die as my generation did." . . .

With his life in Balgat . . . the Chief is contented. At sixty-three his desires have been quieted and his ambitions achieved. To Tosun's question on contentment he replied with another question: "What could be asked more? God has brought me to this mature age without much pain, has given me sons and daughters, has put me at the head of my village, and has given me strength of brain and body at this age. Thanks be to Him."

A traditional village meeting, in which village leaders sit together in a circle, is still the most common method of resolving local issues in the Middle East.

The Grocer is a very different style of man. Though born and bred in Balgat, he lives in a different world, an expansive world, populated more actively with imaginings and fantasies —hungering for whatever is different and unfamiliar. Where the Chief is contented, the Grocer is restless. To Tosun's probe, the Grocer replied . . . : "I have told you I want better things. I would have liked to have a bigger grocery shop in the city, have a nice house there, dress in nice civilian clothes."

[A]fter each respondent had named the greatest problem facing the Turkish people . . . Tosun asked [each one] what he would do about this problem if he were the president of Turkey. Most responded by stolid silence—the traditional way of handling "projective questions" which require people to imagine themselves or things to be different from what they "really are." Some were shocked by the impropriety of the

Rather more surprising was Tosun's discovery that some Balgati went for advice also to the disreputable Grocer. What did they ask his advice about? "What to do when they go to Ankara, where to go and what to buy, how much to sell their things for." . . . This suggested . . . a new role for the Grocer as cosmopolitan specialist in how to avoid wooden nickels in the big city. Also, how to spend the real nickels one got. For the Grocer was a man of clear convictions on which coffeehouses played the best radio programs and which were the best movies to see in Ankara. . . .

Movies . . . were his avenue to the wider world of his dreams. It was in a movie that he had first glimpsed what a real grocery store could be like—"with walls made of iron sheets, top to floor and side to side, and on them standing myriads of round boxes, clean and all the same, dressed, like soldiers in a great parade." This fleeting glimpse . . . had provided the Grocer with an . . . image of how his fantasy world might look. It was here, quite likely, that he had shaped the ambition earlier confided to Tosun, "to have a bigger grocery shop in the city." . . .

BALGAT REVISITED: 1954

I reached Ankara in April after a [trip] through the Middle East. . . . I called a transportation service and explained that I [and my interviewers] wanted to go out the following day, a Sunday, to a village some eight kilometers south that might be hard to reach. As I wanted to spend the day, would the driver meet me at 8 A.M. and bring along his lunch? . . . [The next morning when the car arrived] we got in and settled back for a rough haul. Twenty minutes later . . . the driver said briskly: "There's Balgat."

We looked puzzled at each other until Tosun's words of 1950 recurred to us: "It could have been half an hour to Ankara if it had a road." . . . Feeling strange, we made our way along the erratic path through the old village, led and followed by a small horde of children, to the house of the Chief. . . .

The Chief looked as I had imagined. His cheeks a bit more sunken, perhaps, but the whole presence quite familiar.

Tall, lean, hard, he walked erect and looked me straight in the eye. His own eyes were . . . black and did not waver as he stretched out a handful of long, bony fingers. "*Gun aydin*, Bey Efendim," he said. "Good day, sir, you are welcome to my house." . . .

The Chief heard me through gravely, and when he spoke I knew I was in. He bypassed the set of formulas available to him—for rejecting or evading my implied request—and responded directly to the point. I was right to have come to see Balgat for myself. He remembered [Tosun] well. . . . Much had changed in Balgat since that time. Indeed, Balgat was no longer a village. It had, only last month, been incorporated as a district of Greater Ankara. This was why they now had a new headquarters of metropolitan police, and a bus service, and electricity, and a supply of pure water which would soon be in operation. Where there had been 50 houses, there were now over 500, and even he, the *Muhtar*, did not know any more all the people living here.

Yes he had lived in Balgat all his life and never in all that time seen so much happen as had come to pass in these four years. . . . Tahir [my interviewer] and I, he said, could walk about Balgat entirely as we wished and speak with whomsoever it pleased us to honor. . . . We set out for a stroll around Balgat. Our next goal was to find the Grocer.

After a couple of bends and turns, we came to a coffeehouse. . . . We stopped at the door and bade the proprietor "*Gun aydin*!" He promptly rushed forward with two chairs. . . . In a matter of minutes, the male population of Balgat was assembled around our two chairs, squatting, sitting on the ground, looking us over with open and friendly curiosity. . . . [M]any changes had occurred in Balgat. [Our respondent's] inventory included . . . all the by-now familiar items: road, bus, electricity, water. . . .

Other voices were finally raised. . . . [A] farmer undertook to explain why he was no longer a farmer. He had retired, over a year ago, because there was no one left in Balgat to do an honest day's work for an honest day's lira. Or rather two lira [about 36 cents]—the absurd rate, he said, to which the daily wage of farm laborers had been driven by the competition of the . . . Ankara labor market. Now, all the so-called able-bodied men of Balgat had forsaken the natural work praised by Allah and swarmed off to the Ankara factories where, for eight hours of so-called work, they could get five lira a day. . . . Surprised, we asked whether it was indeed true that there were no farm laborers left in Balgat any more. "How many of you," we quickly rephrased the question, "work on farms now?" Four hands were raised among the twenty-nine present, and all of these turned out to be small holders working their own land. . . . [It] became clear that most of the male population of Balgat was now . . . working in the factories and construction gangs of Ankara—for cash. . . .

How did they spend the cash they earned? Well, there were now over one hundred radio receivers in Balgat as compared to the lone receiver Tosun had found four years earlier. There were also seven refrigerators, four tractors, three trucks, and one Dodge sedan. Most houses now had electric lights and that had to be paid for. Also, since there was so little farming in Balgat now, much of the food came from the outside (even milk!) and had to be bought in the grocery stores, of which there were now seven in Balgat. . . . How was the Grocer doing? "Which one?" The original one, the great fat one that was here four years ago? "O, that one, he's dead!" . . .

"What a lousy break," growled Tahir . . . as we started back toward the house of the Chief. He was speaking of the Grocer. I didn't know what to say. . . . I felt only a sense of large . . . regret. . . .

THE PASSING OF BALGAT

While dressing slowly, the next morning, I planned my strategy for lunch with the Chief. Had he learned anything from the Grocer?

Most villagers were closer to his [the Grocer's] situation than to the Chief's. The Grocer then was my problem and, as symbol . . . my man. It was he who dramatized most poignantly the personal meaning of the big change now under way throughout the Middle East. . . .

Maybe [he was like] the eighteenth-century field-hand of

England who had left . . . to find a better life in London or Manchester. . . . [or] the nineteenth-century French farm lad . . . who had gone off to San Francisco to hunt gold and, finding none, had then tried his hand as mason, mechanic. . . .

[Once] in Balgat I reported directly to the Chief. . . .

Things had changed . . . [the Chief told us again] and a sign of the gravity of these changes was that he—of a lineage that had always been Muhtars [chiefs] and landowners—was no longer a farmer. Nor was he long to be Muhtar. After the coming election, next month, the incorporation of Balgat into Greater Ankara was to be completed and thereafter it would be administered under the general municipal system. "I am the last Muhtar of Balgat, and I am happy that I have seen Balgat end its history in this way that we are going." The new ways, then, were not bringing evil with them?

"No, people will have to get used to different ways and then some of the excesses, particularly among the young, will disappear. The young people are in some ways a serious disappointment; they think more of clothes and good times than they do of duty and family and country." . . .

And as his two sons were no longer to be farmers, what of them? The Chief's voice did not change, nor did his eyes cloud over, as he replied:

"They are as the others. They think first to serve themselves and not the nation. They had no wish to go to the battle in Korea, where Turkey fights before the eyes of all the world. They are my sons and I speak no ill of them, but I say only that they are as all the others."

I felt at this moment a warmth toward the Chief. . . . His sons had not, after all, learned to fight bravely and die properly. . . . Yet the old Chief bore stoically what must have been a crushing disappointment. These two sons through whom he had hoped to relive his own bright dreams of glory had instead become shopkeepers. The elder son owned a grocery store and the younger one owned Balgat's first clothing store. . . .

We went first to the elder son's grocery store. . . . The central floor space was set out with merchandise. . . . Built into [the counter] was a cash drawer and above each surface a hygienic white porcelain fixture for fluorescent lighting.

Along the walls . . . rows of shelves running from "top to floor and side to side, and on them standing myriads of round boxes, clean and all the same, dressed like soldiers in a great parade." The Grocer's words of aspiration came leaping back as I looked admiringly around the store. His dream house had been built in Balgat—in less time than even he might have forecast—and by none other than the Chief! . . .

[W]e walked in quartet, the Chief and I ahead, the sons behind, to the clothing store of the younger son. . . . The stock inside consisted mainly of dungarees, Levis, coveralls. . . . There was a continuous and growing demand for these goods, the Chief stated solemnly, as more and more Balgati went into the labor market of Ankara. . . . In a corner of the store there was also a small stock of "gentleman's haberdashery"—ready-made suits, shirts, even a rack of neckties.

The younger son, who maintained . . . a steady silence in the presence of the Chief, replied to a direct question from me that he had as yet sold very few items from this department of the store. . . . A few, indeed, had purchased . . . neckties which remained to be exhibited in public. . . . I remembered Tosun's rather nasty comment about the Grocer: "He even wore some sort of a necktie." As one saw it now, the Grocer had shown the way, and it was now only a hop, skip, and jump through history to the point where most men of Balgat would be wearing neckties. . . .

The afternoon was about over before I got an appropriate occasion to ask about the Grocer. It came when the talk returned to the villagers' favorite topic of how much better life had become during the past four years. . . . Again they illustrated the matter by [mentioning] the new shops in Balgat and the things they had to sell that many people could buy. There was even a new barber shop, opened last month. . . . "How are these new grocery shops better than the old grocery shop of years ago owned by the fat grocer who is now dead?" I asked. [T]he question served to lead to another: What sort of man had the Grocer been?

The answers were . . . [short], consisting mainly of pro forma expressions of goodwill toward the departed. . . . How had the Grocer dressed? Why had he been so interested in the life of Ankara? The light finally shone in one of the wiser heads and he spoke the words I was seeking:

"Ah, he was the cleverest of us all. We did not know it then, but he saw better than all what lay in the path ahead. We have none like this among us now. He was a prophet. . . ."

The ancient village I had known for what now seemed only four short years was passing, had passed. The Grocer was dead. The Chief—"the last Muhtar of Balgat"—had reincarnated the Grocer in the flesh of his sons.

A Lebanese Family

Editor's Introduction: In "The Grocer and the Chief," we saw how rapidly change can come to a traditional community. In a few short years a substantial portion of a community can change many of its customs. Such rapid social change most often occurs when in connection with economic changes—for example, industrialization of an area.

In certain parts of the Middle East, especially in the big cities, the kinds of change described in "The Grocer and the Chief" have been going on for thirty or forty years. As a result, the life-styles of many urban dwellers in the Middle East are very similar to the life-styles of Westerners. The family introduced in the following selection live in Beirut, Lebanon, but they might just as well be a family in Istanbul, Cairo, Teheran or other cities in the Middle East. The selection depicts part of a typical day in their lives.

In what ways is this family similar to an American family? What details indicate that it is a Middle Eastern family and not an American one?

"*Habeebty* Samar, it's past six o'clock and your aunt did so want to see you, especially as you promised to be home early. . . . Samar, dear, you told me you would be here by five, latest."

"I'm sorry."

Her mother sighed, put down her sewing and lit a cigarette from the box on the round damascene wood table in front of the sofa on which she was sitting. . . .

Rima Alamuddin, *Spring to Summer* (Beirut: Khayats, 1963), pp. 14–21.

"I'm sorry I was late. I was drawing."

"You spend so much time with this art of yours . . . and then you come back and study all evening. The family never sees you, so I was very sad that you –"

"I forgot the time, Mama."

"I wish you would pay attention when I tell you something, dear. I know you don't do it on purpose, and it would be all right if you were living alone, but you must help me sometimes. You're big, now. I had a very tiring day shopping, and I told you only at lunchtime that your aunt would be coming for tea and I needed your help."

"I'm sorry." She took her coat off and went to hang it up in the small, dark vestibule. Her mother did not look up when she reappeared.

"You're a good girl, Samar, but you're always in the clouds. . . . Samar, are you listening?"

"Yes, Mama." She had only been hearing. . . .

"What are you always thinking about, Samar?"

"Nothing special." She felt very tired, there was Hegel [to study] and she wanted a cigarette, for both of which she had to be alone, in her room.

"Where are you going, dear?"

"To my room. I have some work for tomorrow."

"Well, supper is quite soon, when your father comes. Tell Farid, he's in his room."

"Yes, Mama."

[The door of her room] was locked.

She gave a polite knock. After some time the key turned and the door was flung open. Her brother, his long form enveloped in cigarette smoke, had made himself [at] home on her bed, with his books strewn over the floor and the dark green . . . rug kicked halfway under the bed. Both the overhead and the small bedside lights were on, and the window was wide open.

"And what, may I ask, is wrong with *your* room?" She put her books on the large desk in the corner and automatically began arranging them with the others.

"Someone broke one of my windows," Farid mumbled, regaining the bed. "Sshh. I have an exam tomorrow."

"Sit down, dear, sit down." She did so, in the large chair of which she was particularly proud, having bought it at second hand with her own money. "You've been smoking like a chimney, right? For over six months, right? And there's nothing Mama doesn't find out about, right?"

"I don't care."

"I'll bet you don't."

"Thank you, Farid," she said, after a short silence, during which they had been scrutinizing each other, "thank you. But I must study." . . .

"All right. All right. And anyway, Father has just come. So supper [will be soon]."

He shut the door behind him with a bang and she surveyed the crumpled bed spread, the ashes on the floor, on the bed, on the bedside table, the smoke in a thick, tiered cloud.

With a tired sigh she smoothed the bed, picked up Hegel (sixty interminable and interchangeable pages from *Phenomenology of Spirit*) and began to read. Thirty minutes later she had fifty-five pages ahead of her and her hair down—she had been pulling strand after strand of straight black hair from her once neat plait.

Farid barged in noisily, remarked something about disheveled females, and added that supper was ready.

All three were seated and had begun the usual meal of olives, tomatoes, cold meat, cheese and bread, when she finally appeared.

"And how is Samar?" Her father enquired as usual, getting the usual reply.

"You look pale —"

"Exams, Father," she volunteered hesitantly. He searched her face for a few moments and then asked for the cheese. Her mother had always claimed that Samar had inherited her absentmindedness from her father. He was a good man, everybody agreed; having been in the same job in an insurance company for twenty-five years; moreover, he was honest, kind, had the accepted political beliefs of a man of his age . . . and was settled at the age of forty-seven with too much fat and too little hair.

"Really, Fuad, can't we do anything about these neighbors?"

The news blared forth, monotonous and loud, from all the open windows.

"What can you expect, dear? If we ask them, they get insulted; if we warn them, they start a feud. I'd rather bear it for a few minutes."

"I still think –"

"Father," Farid broke in, looking for the olives which Samar passed silently, "Professor Hani told me you and he had been classmates."

"Oh yes, Antoine Hani. . . . We saw him at that cocktail party we went to last week, didn't we, dear?"

"I think I remember. . . . Samar, will you pass the water?"

The meal was very much as usual. Once or twice remarks were addressed in her direction, and she replied appropriately. She was thinking about her father, and that very little intimacy had ever emerged between them. . . . What she would remember of him were his very rare but destructive outbursts of fury, which were immediately followed by tenderness (rarely an apology). She had been the recipient of one, two years before, when she had inadvertently revealed that she had read *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. His fury had nailed her to the wall, and there had been no tenderness to follow, because she had been too dazed to play her part in the small game of kissing him lightly, receiving a pat, and forgetting the whole thing. She had not even locked herself into her room but had started a loud, raucous card game with Farid, who had been sympathetic and cooperative, having himself frequently been the target of such outbursts. . . .

"I have a confession, Father," Farid began, his eyes bright, fingers playing with a knife.

"Well?"

"You'll find the paint a little scraped on the right door of the car. I'm sorry."

"I see. And when did this happen?"

"This afternoon; I was backing out, and–"

"–And the other fellow didn't see you? Yes, I seem to have heard this before." A muscle began to twitch in Farid's cheek, but he said nothing, keeping his eyes on his father. "It's all right by me–after all, it's high time I got used to it, isn't it?" He laughed with genuine amusement, and Farid looked surprised but wary. "As long as you pay for the repairs."

"But—I haven't got the money—I was hoping—"

"I know you were, son. But remember our agreement. If you take the car you're responsible."

"Yes, but—"

"Fuad, never mind this once." With a pleading look at her husband she got up and began to fuss with the plates. Samar rose to help; it was the maid's evening off.

"You get a decent allowance, and if you choose to squander it foolishly you will have to look for a job. I'm sorry, but you're almost twenty-one, and I think it's high time you grew up." He pushed his chair back with a pleasant smile. Farid kept his face clear of all expression. . . .

"If you've a class at seven-thirty tomorrow, dear, you'd better eat something." His mother hovered about the table.

"It's an exam, not a class," he replied irritably.

"All the more reason to eat something."

"I have eaten!"

"You know, I agree with your father. He started working at seventeen—"

"Oh, we all know he's a paragon." His voice was low, and did not travel to the sitting-room, where the subject of the conversation was reading a newspaper.

"Farid . . ." Samar murmured.

"You shut up! And keep out of this."

She removed his plate with great calm, took the tablecloth, shook it out of the window, folded it, and put it in the drawer with the napkins.

"And your martyred silences don't impress me," he finished savagely, stood up, uttered a loud and cheerful "Goodnight" and slammed three doors in succession.

"He has become so difficult . . ." her mother [said] . . . having returned the farewell. . . .

"He's spoilt."

"A little, maybe, but he can be such a good boy. . . ."

Samar placed a vase of flowers on the table. . . .

"Never mind, Mama. Goodnight."

Part II

Past Glories, Future Hopes

Introduction

IN PART I, we learned about some of the traditional values of the Middle East and how they were passed on from parents to children. We also learned about some of the changes taking place today in the traditional way of life, for the Middle East, like many parts of the world, is going through a period of modernization. In other words, it is becoming more Western, at least in some ways. Once the modernization process starts, a new perspective is needed to deal with the rapidly changing world. The development of industry and technology demands modern schools and new ways of doing things.

But in the Middle East modernization means not merely an imitation of the Western world but a merging of Middle Eastern and Western ways. The Middle East has its own traditions and its own historical triumphs. There was a time when the rest of the world looked to the Middle East for the most advanced technology. In this volume, we shall consider these glories of the past and the attempts of the nations of the Middle East to regain a position of importance in the world.

We begin by looking at European colonization in the Middle East, which led directly to the development of Turkish, Persian, and Arab nationalism. Although the Turks, Persians, and Arabs differ ethnically and linguistically, they share a common religious and cultural tradition. Surrounded by evi-

Many modern Middle Eastern women are indistinguishable from their sisters in the West. This young woman is listening to language tapes at a U.N.-assisted teacher-training college in Libya.

"Who broke one of your windows?"

"I did. Shut up, woman."

"And whose cigarettes are you smoking?" She opened the white-painted cupboard, which took up half a wall, and bent down. The rubber boot which usually contained her cigarette packet was empty. . . . "May I ask for one of my cigarettes, please?" . . .

"How dare you accuse me of pinching your cigarettes—who bought them for you, anyway? And besides, [mother] knows you smoke."

"Of course," she murmured with rising apprehension, knowing her mother's quick temper.

"She does, she does. She told me she'd found ashes under your bed. So what does your dear brother do? He moves in here and smokes and claims the ashes as his own. . . ."

"She thinks you're in your room." . . .

BASIC DATA: THE MIDDLE EAST

Country	*Year of Independence*	*Present or Former Colonial Authority*
Afghanistan	since ancient times	–
Algeria	1962	France
Bahrain	–	Great Britain
Iran	since ancient times	–
Iraq	1932	Great Britain
Israel	1948	Great Britain
Jordan	1946	Great Britain
Kuwait	1961	Great Britain
Lebanon	1944	France
Libya	1951	Italy
Morocco	1956	France
Saudi Arabia	1913	Ottoman Empire
South Yeman	1967	Great Britain
Syria	1944	France
Tunisia	1956	France
Turkey	since ancient times	–
United Arab Rep. (Egypt)	1922–1936	Great Britain
Yemen	1918	Ottoman Empire

dence of past glories, from the pyramids and the magnificent Islamic architecture to their great classical poetry and art, all three Moslem peoples can look back to a time when they were renowned throughout the world for their cultural and military achievements. All are well aware of their fallen place in the world and are determined to regain the status they had before their humiliation at the hands of European colonialists.

In their efforts to understand what happened to them, Middle Easterners blamed both the effects of colonization and internal corruption in their decaying empires. Turkish, Persian, and Arab nationalists saw a need for both an external revolution, against their colonial oppressors, and an internal revolution, against their own corrupt and outdated institutions. The best of the traditional beliefs, which had given rise to the great Middle Eastern civilizations of the past, had to be welded to the progressive social, economic, and political systems of the West. As a reaction against what they saw as the excessive greed of the colonialists, some Middle Eastern countries rejected capitalism and turned to a kind of Islamic socialism that avoided the godless aspects of socialism and communism. But whatever political or economic system was developed, the changes we describe in this Part were an attempt to establish a new "golden age" in the Middle East. The prospects for the development of a new golden age improved greatly with the discovery of vast quantities of oil in the Middle East. We therefore look at some of the extraordinary changes taking place as a result of the Middle East's virtual monopoly of the world's oil supply.

The Middle Easterners, especially the Arabs, have another source of humiliation in addition to their fall from eminence: the establishment of the state of Israel in the heart of the Arab lands. From the point of view of the Arabs, Israel is a creation of the Western colonial powers forced upon them during the colonial period and maintained through a kind of neocolonialism. Needless to say, the Israelis do not see their nation in this light. In the last part of this volume, we consider the events that led to the return of the Jewish people to their homeland and the official establishment of the Jewish state of Israel. The clash of Jewish and Arab nationalisms is one of the great tragedies of the modern world, for in the broadest sense it is a conflict of two equally valid historical forces.

There is, of course, much more to understand about Israel than the political disputes surrounding its birth. We take a brief look at life today in this complex culture, with its varied languages, nationalities, and perspectives. In examining some of the factors and philosophies that went into the making of Israel, we hope to convey some of the spirit as well as the tensions of this diverse country.

As you read, you may wish to compare some of the forces that shape the Middle East today with those that shape our own lives. Is it true that the countries of the world are increasingly dependent on one another? Do you think the world is getting smaller or larger?

Les Platanes

As the Algerian revolution progressed, the French administration sealed off Moslem quarters. Moslems entering European quarters were carefully searched.

added: "You think you're pretty smart, Ben Bella, but we will show you that we are even smarter than you." As I left, I realized that I had lost the farm. . . .

[Afterwards] I went to Algiers, and changed my name. This was in 1947, and from that date onwards I became a clandestine fighter, and remained one until the day of my arrest.

Colonialism and the Making of a Revolution

Editor's Introduction: Until the 1940's and 1950's, most Middle Eastern countries were under some form of control by European countries. France had colonies in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Syria, and Lebanon; Britain had control in Palestine, Iraq, and Egypt. Libya was an Italian colony. There were some differences among the British, French, and Italian systems of colonization, but these systems shared the same underlying premises: that European culture was superior, and that the colonized peoples were not yet ready to participate fully in running their own countries. At best, the colonized people were seen as potential equals who needed to be civilized; at worst, they were viewed as inferior savages who never could be equal to Europeans.

This attitude was understandably resented by the colonized peoples and led to the growth of nationalistic feelings and to the demand for self-government. When this demand was ignored and it became evident that only force could bring change, revolutionary movements were born throughout the Middle East.

The most violent of the revolutions against European powers took place in Algeria, which was under the control of France. The conditions that existed there at the start of the revolution were typical of conditions in many other colonized countries in the Middle East. Although the French had come to Algeria more than a hundred years before, they had done little to better the lives of

Robert Merle, *Ahmed Ben Bella* (New York: Walker and Co., 1967), pp. 39–46, 52–53, 68–73, 77. Copyright © 1965 by Éditions Gallimard (Paris) and reprinted by permission.

the people. In 1954, only 10 per cent of Algerian children went to school, as opposed to 100 per cent of the French children. As a result, 95 per cent of Algerian men were illiterate, and 90 per cent of the commerce and industry was controlled by the French. In addition, 50 per cent of Algerian men were employed fewer than a hundred days a year. The French, in short, ran the country for their own benefit and exploited the cheap labor of the uneducated Algerians.

As a result of this kind of treatment, the Algerians became a desperate people who would do anything to gain their freedom. When their neighbors, Morocco and Tunisia, won independence from France in 1956, the Algerians intensified their struggle. The FLN (National Liberation Front), the secret Algerian revolutionary command, which had the full support of the people, launched wave after wave of massive peaceful demonstrations, terrorist attacks, and guerrilla warfare against the French colonial government. The French met the challenge to their rule with torture and escalated violence, killing as many as forty thousand Algerians in one retaliatory action. But each repressive action brought renewed determination. After eight years of violence, the French saw that they could not continue to resist the wishes of the masses of Algerians, and in 1962 Algeria gained its independence.

One of the leaders of the Algerian revolt was a young man named Ahmed Ben Bella, who was to become the first leader of independent Algeria. In 1965, Ben Bella was overthrown by his fellow revolutionary Colonel Houari Boumedienne, who has ruled Algeria from that time to the present.

In the selection that follows, Ben Bella tells of his boyhood in Algeria and his gradual conversion to revolutionary action. What led Ben Bella to become a revolutionary?

I WAS BORN on the 25th December 1918 at Marnia, a small market town in the Oran district, quite close to the Moroccan frontier. My father was a *fellah* [peasant] and owned a small property of about seventy acres, a mile outside Marnia. But the soil was poor and there was no water supply, so my father's main source of income was the small business he ran in Marnia, where we lived. . . .

[After] I passed [primary school] it was decided that I should go to the nearest town for further education. A friend of my father's who lived in Tlemcen was generous enough to to itself all those Algerians who were determined that colonialism could no longer be tolerated as a necessary evil. It consisted mainly of ardent and dedicated young men, one of whom, Abdelkrim Baraka, initiated me. He was a year older than me, and was studying at a *médersa* [a Moslem religious school]. The wave of nationalism at that time was surging through the *médersas,* with their 100-percent Moslem students, with far greater force than in the French schools. . . .

In 1934 . . . I had already made up my mind; I was certainly not going to intrigue for some comfortable job as a minor government official, let myself sink into a cosy routine and turn my back on the vast unhappiness of my people. . . . I [left school and] decided to go back to Marnia. I found employment but did not definitely commit myself to anything. . . . I put my name down for voluntary military training at Marnia, obviously not from any excess of enthusiasm, but because I felt that the experience gained would be useful to me some day.

In 1937 I was called up for military service and posted to the 141st Alpine Infantry Regiment at Marseilles. . . . During the summer of 1943, [I was] posted to the 6th Algerian Infantry Regiment at Tlemcen. What a contrast to the 141st Regiment [in France, which treated Frenchmen and Algerians equally]! The discrimination practiced between Algerians and Frenchmen in the ranks was flagrant. There were two completely separate officers' messes and two separate sergeants' messes. Our plates were not allowed to fraternize with the plates of Frenchmen of the same rank. We were not allowed to touch glasses with them, even though their glasses were filled with wine and ours with water. I will not dwell on the awkwardness and the humiliations which were the result of this segregation.

The Algerians were becoming more and more resentful of this discrimination. To all people living under colonial rule, the year 1940 [and the start of World War II] had burst like a clap of thunder. The course of history had broken loose from its traditional boundaries and was gathering speed. Frontiers had been overrun, states were disintegrating, everything was chaotic. We felt that Algeria could not stand aside from the great upheavals of the century. . . .

strips of meat hung from poles around the city, and chose as the site for the hospital the place where the meat had decayed the least. Al Razi wrote books on smallpox and measles as well as his most famous work, an encyclopedia that catalogued all Greek, Hindu, and Persian medical knowledge as well as the results of his own medical research.

An equally famous physician, Ibn Sina, known to the West as Avicenna, codified all Greek and Arabic medical knowledge into a volume that became the standard medical textbook in the Arab world and in Europe for the next eight hundred years. Works on dietetics and pharmacology were published by others. The first pharmacies date from this period, during which there were more than eight hundred registered pharmacists in Baghdad.

Original scientific research was also conducted in the field of astronomy. Because of their desert tradition, the Arabs had always been interested in the stars; the Sabean Arabs had even been star-worshipers prior to the coming of Islam. With the translation of Ptolemy's astronomical works, interest in astronomy increased, leading to the construction of an observatory in Baghdad that was to calculate accurately the length of the solar year. And five hundred years before the Western world accepted the fact that the earth was round, Arab astronomers conducted experiments to determine the length of a terrestrial degree on the earth; their estimate of 56⅔ miles was within a half-mile of the correct answer. Other astronomers studied the moon's influence on the tides, and corrected errors in Ptolemy's observations of the orbit of the moon and planets. A mathematician, Al Khwarizmi, designed the first set of astronomical tables in Arabic and wrote a book on algebra that was widely used in Europe and thus introduced the word *algebra* into English. Other original research was done in the fields of chemistry, zoology, music, and philosophy.

The expansion of the Arab Empire contributed greatly to the development of the field of geography. Moslem merchants had reached China in the seventh century A.D., long before the reign of Harun, and Arab traders had journeyed as far as Russia, Zanzibar, Morocco, and Spain. These travelers kept records, and as a result an interest in geography developed. The offer me hospitality for the time it would take [to go to secondary school].

At Tlemcen, the gulf between the French world and the Algerian world was obvious. Discrimination hit you in the face, even at school. At Tlemcen I felt, for the first time, that I belonged to a community which was considered inferior by the Europeans. For the first time I realized that I was a foreigner in my own country.

I think I was fourteen when . . . an incident occurred which made a deep impression on me. One of the teachers was called Benavidès . . . he was French and an excellent teacher when he did not bore us with long digressions on the religions of the world. . . . Faith in his own religion made him believe that all others were bad and despicable.

One day during school, he did not hesitate to go for his Moslem pupils, launching a violent attack on Islam. "Your prophet Mohammed," he shouted at the end of this diatribe, "was nothing but an impostor!"

I stood up, pale with anger. "Sir," I told him, ". . . you must understand that to us our religion is sacred. No, no, it is wrong of you to speak like this." I cannot remember my exact words, because I was trembling with rage—I may have been even more outspoken. Of course Benavidès blew up. It was terrible. I was punished, dismissed from the class, and even threatened with expulsion. But I stuck it out, and gradually the scandal died down. And it was a double scandal, as I well knew. Firstly, for a pupil to tick off a teacher was bad enough. But for a "native" to stand up to a European made me a thousand times more guilty.

I remember this incident because it made me feel ill for over a fortnight and left a lasting impression on me. But it was not isolated. At school and in the town, dozens of small insults reminded me every day of the discrimination against us. I made up my mind that I myself would never submit to it, and it was from that moment that, deep in my heart, I felt myself becoming a rebel. . . .

It was at this period that I made contact with nationalist groups. The *Union Nationaliste des Musulmans nord-africains* . . . had just been founded. This National Union had attracted

In the 6th Infantry, a movement against segregation, of which I was the chief organizer, had begun to take place in the Algerian ranks. . . . My superiors had no doubts as to the part I played in this matter, and a few months later I was transferred, without a word of explanation, to the 5th Moroccan Infantry Regiment [at Oudja]. It was a clever move. I found myself the only Algerian among Moroccans. . . .

It was at Oudja that rumors reached me of the events of 1945 [when, in retaliation for an uprising in which scores of Frenchmen were killed, forty thousand Algerians were massacred]. I was profoundly shocked by the fierce repressive measure which followed the rising. According to the evidence, it was quite clear that, when the war was over, colonialism was not going to cede anything to the Algerians, and that rule by fear would prevail.

I was meditating, on this bitter lesson when my chiefs suggested that I should stay on in the French army. . . . I refused the offer, giving as my reason the fact that my family was in distress. . . . In reality, it was the events of Constantine [where the Algerians were slaughtered] which made me decide to refuse. . . .

No sooner had I returned to Marnia than my compatriots asked me to put my name down on a list of candidates for the municipal elections. . . .

In the whole of Algeria, ten million Algerians elected one third of the municipal councilors [known as the *Second Collège*], whereas one million Europeans elected the other two thirds [known as the *Premier Collège*].

The electors of the *Second Collège*! This delightful euphemism was used to describe the Algerians. The *Premier Collège*, naturally, was composed of Europeans: first they were, and first they intended to remain. . . . In each parish, the elected members of the *Second Collège* . . . were . . . resigned and powerless, passive onlookers of the administration of the *Premier Collège*. They were perpetual yes-men who were intended to provide the colonial system with the semblance of democracy. I must confess to feelings of deep skepticism when those same politicians who invented this splendid institution of the two *collèges* accuse present-day [independent] Algeria of not being sufficiently democratic.

. . . As for the [French colonial] democracy, with its ready-made electoral laws, its intrigues, its *Deux Collèges*, and its clever carving-up of districts, we prefer to leave that kind of democracy. . . .

At the very first meeting of the town council of Marnia, it was clear to us that the members of the *Premier Collège*, secure in their superior numbers, had no intention of delegating any authority to the members of the *Second Collège*. It meant that we were denied even the smallest share in the administration of the little town and consequently we were unable to be of use to our electors. The members of the *Second Collège* resigned in a body and were immediately re-elected, in a body, by the electors of the *Second Collège*. . . . The *Premier Collège* could neither vote for nor administer the budget by itself, and although they were in the majority, they were unable to move without us. But we, the minority, only had the right to agree—and in order to disagree, we had to resign. The alternatives were to agree to everything, or to turn everything down.

The Mayor, Monsieur Gerbaud, . . . was a decent fellow, but in order to obtain a minimum of administrative power [from him] it took us three elections. He gave in at the third one—or rather, he thought up a plan. We wanted administrative power: all right, he would let us have it—in full measure! He was convinced, like all Europeans in Algeria, that we "didn't know how to do anything" and that we "couldn't do without them." He thought that he would overwhelm us with hard work and the weight of our responsibilities. What a blow was in store for him! We took on all the tasks he assigned to us, and they did not overwhelm us at all. . . .

As well as being a town councilor, I was also a militant member of [one of the nationalist parties]. The way in which I carried out my daily tasks on behalf of my fellow citizens of Marnia had, in a few months, attracted new supporters to my side, and had turned Marnia into a party headquarters. The chief colonial administrator and his henchmen . . . could not forgive me for this.

One day my brother-in-law, who lived in Marnia, came to see me, looking worried. "Ahmed," he said to me, "So-and-So has moved into your farm and is claiming that it belongs to him." "I will go and fling him out," I answered. "Be careful," my brother-in-law replied, raising his right hand in warning, "I have a feeling that this is a trap. The man himself is not particularly dangerous, because he is a legless cripple. But his cousins are brigands, real killers. . . . May Allah protect you!"

I went to see the cripple, who was indeed in possession of my house. He received me as though he were quite at home, with a wife on either side. He reeled off a long and complicated story which was meant to prove that my farm really belonged to him. Needless to say, he had not even the shadow of documentary proof. But unfortunately, neither had I anything in writing to protect my rights, as land that had already belonged to native families before the conquest of Algeria never carried any title deeds. Property was owned by right of long occupation; my land was mine because my father had cultivated it, and he had inherited it from his father, and so on. There [were quarrels and the] colonial administration made the most of these quarrels, sometimes even creating them in order to favor those whom they considered to be "good natives" against the "bad natives." . . .

The more I listened to him, the more I was convinced that my brother-in-law was right, and that the whole business had been rigged by the administration. If I gave in, I would be dispossessed of my rights and discredited in the eyes of my fellow citizens. If I resorted to violence, the cousins were there to eliminate me physically. They would be tried as a matter of form, but the murder of a "native" by another "native" was of no importance. Ten witnesses would be found who would swear great oaths that the murderer had acted in self-defense.

I tried by every possible legal means to recover my property, but I was up against a brick wall. My final step was to ask for an interview with the [French] administrator. The way in which he received me left me devoid of hope: he was triumphant. His eyes sparkled with malice and he never once dropped his sarcasm, even when I reminded him of my war record. . . . I got up to go and said to him: "Tell me, *monsieur l'administrateur,* what exactly are you driving at?" He answered in the same ironic voice: "You will see all right," and then

The Arab Golden Age: Harun Al Rashid's Baghdad

Editor's Introduction: As we have seen, the colonization of the Middle Eastern countries and the refusal of the colonizers to treat the Middle Easterners as equals created a great deal of resentment against Europeans. The Arabs found the feelings of superiority expressed by the Europeans especially hard to tolerate, for they had had a flourishing civilization stretching from Iran to Morocco and Spain at a time when Europeans were still wearing animal skins. Furthermore, they looked upon themselves as a special people, for Mohammed, who was used by God to communicate His word and to correct the misinterpretations of the Jews and the Christians, was an Arab. Thus, in connection with their nationalistic feelings, the Arabs began to look back to their Golden Age for inspiration, to the ancient glories of Baghdad (Iraq), and to the refined Arab civilization in Spain and Morocco known to the West as "Moorish."

The following selection looks at the Baghdad of Harun Al Rashid, the setting for the famous *Tales of the Arabian Nights.* What made Harun's Baghdad great? What role did the Arabs play in the intellectual history of man?

THE SWEEP OF the armies of Islam out of the Arabian peninsula following the death of Mohammed was to lead to the development of many great Islamic civilizations, from the

By Robert P. Pearson.

famous Moorish civilization in Spain to the civilization of the Moguls in India, the builders of the Taj Mahal. After the death of the prophet, in A.D. 632, the center of gravity of the growing Arab Empire shifted from Mecca to Damascus, Syria. For the next hundred years Damascus was the home of the Umayyad caliphate, the official religious governing body of Islam. Following the temporary decline of the Umayyad caliphate in A.D. 750, the center of the Islamic civilization gravitated to Iraq with the rise of Abul Abbas, the founder of the new Abbasid caliphate. His brother and successor, Mansur, built a new capital, Baghdad. The zenith of the Abbasid caliphate and the Arab Golden Age came with the ascendancy of Mansur's grandson Harun Al Rashid, the famous Caliph of the 1,001 Arabian nights.

Harun's Baghdad is perhaps best known for the wealth and luxurious life-styles of its inhabitants. As a commercial center it was unsurpassed. Ships from all over the world brought their rich cargoes to the Persian Gulf and up the Tigris River to Baghdad. Silks and porcelain from China, spices and precious metals from India, and ivory, gold dust, and black slaves from Africa were shipped to Baghdad by sea. Caravans brought jewels overland from Turkey, pearls from Arabia, and furs and white slaves from Scandinavia and Russia. Taxes in the form of money or goods flowed into the capital from all the provinces of the empire, and wealthy merchants developed trade networks on land and sea linking the commercial centers of Europe, Asia, and Africa. The Middle East, because of its geographical position, became the center of world trade. As a result, the ruling classes were able to live on a scale that the world had rarely seen before. Harun's wife, Zubeidah, who set the fashions of the city, wore jewel-studded shoes and had workmen design and construct a tree of mechanical chirping birds made of pure gold. At the wedding of her son, Mamun, Zubeidah arranged for the couple to be showered with pearls while they sat on a carpet of gold studded with jewels. Many of the guests in attendance were honored with the gift of an estate or a slave, given to them by means of a ticket hidden in the perfumed gifts distributed during the wedding.

Luxurious living was not confined to the ruling classes.

With Baghdad and the Middle East as the center of world trade, a new and wealthy middle class of artisans, merchants, and professional men arose whose services commanded high salaries. Indeed, the economic boom affected all classes; few lives were left untouched.

Although wealth was perhaps the most spectacular aspect of Harun's Baghdad, its cultural and scientific achievements were more significant. Harun wanted Baghdad to be the center of world learning, and to this end he invited famous poets and scholars from all over the Middle East, including Turks and Persians as well as Arabs, to come to Baghdad to work and live.

The intellectual ferment began with the translation of books from all over the world into Arabic. One of these books was an Indian text on astronomy and the Indian system of numbers. Borrowed by the Arabs, this system has in turn been adopted by the Western world and is used in the West today. What we know as Arabic numerals, the decimal system, and the use of the number zero have come to us by way of Harun's Baghdad. A large number of Greek texts were also translated, including the works of Aristotle and Plato as well as works on medicine, mathematics, and astronomy. The medical works of Galen and Hippocrates, Euclid's *Elements of Geometry*, and Ptolemy's astronomical writings were among the books translated from Greek into Arabic, with the help of Syrian Christians who could read both Greek and Arabic. Much of Greek learning that otherwise might well have disappeared was thus saved for the world. The resurgence of interest in Greek civilization today owes much to these unknown translators of Harun's court. Under Harun's son, Mamun, the translation of documents continued with the establishment of a House of Wisdom, which had a vast library with an academy for scholarly learning and also sponsored original research.

Original research in the field of medicine included the dissection of apes by the Christian physician Yuhanna and the production of a ten-volume treatise on the eye by his student Hunayn. There were many famous practicing physicians as well, such as Al Razi, known to the West as Rhazes. Al Razi, when asked to pick a site for a new hospital in Baghdad, had

The mosque of Al Azhar University in Cairo, with its graceful minarets, is representative of the magnificent architecture of the Arab Golden Age.

greatest geographer of his time, Yakut, organized existing geographical knowledge into an encyclopedia including cultural, historical, and geographical data on the entire known world.

Learning in Baghdad was not confined to the scholarly work of the House of Wisdom. There were elementary schools for both boys and girls. Theological colleges were established for the advanced study of Islam and became the models for the religious colleges of today in the Middle East, such as the famous religious university of Al Azhar in Cairo. There were public as well as private libraries, and many bookstalls were to be found on the streets of Baghdad.

The development of an empire brought the need for an efficient government and communication system. A well-trained police force was organized to keep order in the towns, and a standing army, drawn from all the tribes and provinces, helped keep the countryside under control and safe for travel. For the benefit of travelers, inns and hostels were maintained in various parts of Harun's domain, and a system similar to our pony express assured mail delivery throughout the provinces. The delivery of mail was supplemented by a carrier-pigeon service for the speedy exchange of messages.

To assure maximum food supplies, ancient canal systems established in Babylonian times were restored, and irrigation was extended throughout the land. Increased food production meant increased wealth for the nation, for taxes were often paid in food or goods as well as in cash. It also made more ambitious military conquests possible, and these in turn brought new lands under cultivation.

By A.D. 710, Arab armies had crossed North Africa to Morocco, and from there, with the help of the Moroccan Moors, they crossed the Straits to the Jebel Al Tariq, the Rock of Gibraltar, and Spain. The revival of the Ummayad caliphate in Spain led to another glorious period in Arab history, which reached its peak during the reign of Abdur Rahman from A.D. 912 to 961. The Arab, or Moorish, civilization of Spain is perhaps more familiar to Westerners than that of Harun's Baghdad. Tourists today still visit some of the great Moorish cities in Spain, such as Cordova and Granada. It was not until five hundred years later, in 1492, the year that Columbus sailed in search of a new route to India, that the Moors were finally forced out of Granada by the Spanish Christians. Soon thereafter, they retreated back across the Strait of Gibraltar to Morocco.

For seven hundred years, the Arab and Moslem civilizations had dominated the Middle East and North Africa, and in Harun's Baghdad and Moorish Spain their way of life represented the highest civilization of its time. With the fall of Baghdad to the Seljuk Turks in A.D. 1055 and the final ouster of the Moors from Granada in 1492, Arab influence in the Middle East and in world affairs dwindled, and the initiative in world affairs passed to the Europeans. In the Middle East the Arabs increasingly came under the control of another Moslem power, that of the Ottoman Turks, who were to reign supreme for more than four hundred years, until their final downfall as an international power as a result of World War I.

The Ottoman Empire

Editor's Introduction: The heir to the power and magnificence of the Arab Golden Age in the Middle East was the Ottoman Empire. The Ottomans rose to power in Turkey during the fourteenth century and by 1453 had conquered the Byzantine Christian city of Constantinople (Istanbul) and were in control of southeastern Europe as far as the Danube. Once their foothold in Europe was secure, the Ottomans pushed southward into the Arab lands. By the middle of the sixteenth century they were in control of Syria, Palestine, Arabia, Egypt, and most of North Africa. This empire, which they were to hold for the next three hundred and fifty years, continued the influential role of Islamic civilizations in the history of the world. It was not until their defeat in World War I that the Ottomans lost control of their empire and were forced back to the borders of present-day Turkey.

The Ottomans are best known for their military prowess and their administrative skills. Their most famous governing device was *devshirme*, a system by which conquered Christian villages were forced to contribute young boys to the state for special training and service in the military and in government. Although these boys were in most ways considered to be slaves, their advancement in the service of the Sultan was based on merit alone rather than on the system of hereditary connections common to most governments of the world at that time. The most capable boys rose to positions of great importance in the military and in the Sultan's palace government. It was with the collapse of this system and the gradual introduction of corruption in the government that the Ottoman Empire began to decline in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The first part of the following selection suggests the strength and pageantry of the Ottoman armies under the leadership of Suleyman the Magnificent as they entered Aleppo, Syria, on their way to battle the Persians. This eyewitness account by an Englishman, Anthony Jenkinson, demonstrates how impressive the Ottoman Turks were to the average citizen of that time. What is the purpose of such a display?

The second part of the selection supplies a picture of the daily lives of the people of Istanbul in 1638, at the height of the Ottoman period. In the selection Sultan Murad IV gives orders for a complete description of the resources of Istanbul in preparation for the coming campaign against Persia. What resources do you think existed in Istanbul at this time? Make a list and compare it with the list given to Sultan Murad IV.

An Eyewitness Account [*]

THERE MARCHED BEFORE the Great Turk [Suleyman] 6,000 light horsemen, very brave, all clothed in scarlet.

After marched 10,000 men clothed all in yellow velvet, with great velvet hats two feet long. They were carrying bows in their hands made in the Turkish fashion.

After them marched four captains, men of arms, clothed all four in crimson velvet, each captain having under his banner 12,000 men of arms, well equipped with helmets on their heads, marching in good order, with short swords by their sides.

After came 16,000 Janissaries, called the slaves of the Great Turk, all on foot, with strange hats on their heads with foot-long silver and gold cones studded with jewels and topped by plumes that waved up and down most bravely when they marched.

After this there came 1,000 pages of honor, all clothed in gold, carrying bows and quivers of arrows, marching in good order.

Then came three men of arms with helmets on their heads and spears at the ready.

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[*] Adapted from Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Discoveries of the English Nation* (London, 1589), vols. V and VIII, as quoted in *Istanbul and the Civilization of the Ottoman Empire*, by Bernard Lewis, copyright 1963 by the University of Oklahoma Press, pp. 62–64.

adventure and glory, but he abstained from all that, preferring to create good-neighbor relations with Russia, Greece, Yugoslavia, Romania, Bulgaria, and the Middle Eastern Islamic neighbors.

His main fear was that he might become the blind dictator, a slave of flattery and conceit. . . .

In respect to the continuity of the regime which he established in Turkey, there was considerable hesitancy in many minds, both inside and outside of the country. The following questions persistently occurred to those interested in the welfare of Turkey: Was not the whole thing a product solely of Ataturk's personal influence? Could it be expected to survive him? Would there not be a conflict for the succession between the leading figures in public life?

Ismet Inonu, Ataturk's closest co-worker and his prime minister for twelve years, was considered the fittest man to succeed to the presidency. . . . So everything stayed under harmonious, friendly control. The death of the first president of the Turkish Republic did not interfere at all with the continuity and stability of the regime.

After them came seven pages of honor clothed in silver, riding on seven white horses, covered with cloths of silver, garnished with emeralds, diamonds, and rubies.

After them came six more pages of honor, clothed in gold with bows in their hands.

Immediately after them came the Great Turk himself, with great pomp and magnificence, riding majestically. On either side of him was a page clothed in gold; he himself was mounted on a fine white horse and was dressed in a robe of gold embroidered with precious stones. On his head was wound a turban of silk at least fifteen yards in length, at the top of which were white ostrich feathers.

After marched the Great Pasha, chief conductor of the whole army, clothed in a robe of crimson, and about him marched fifty Janissaries on foot, also clothed in crimson velvet.

Then after came three other Pashas with slaves about them numbering 3,000.

After came a company of horsemen, brave to behold, all well armed, who numbered 4,000.

All of this army, most amazing to behold, was in number 88,000 men, encamped about the city of Aleppo, Syria. The Great Turk, the Sultan, was himself lodged within the town in a fine castle situated upon a high mountain, at the foot of which ran a goodly river, which is a branch of that famous river, the Euphrates.

The whole army, including the part that went by the mountains as well as that which came to Aleppo, with horsemen and footmen and those who guided the camels and those who prepared the food, numbered 300,000 men. The camels which carried the ammunition and food totaled 200,000.

The Sultan's Edict *

"IN ORDER TO assist me in this great expedition, I desire that all guilds [organizations of people in the same trade] of Constantinople, both large and small, shall [come] to my Imperial camp. They shall exhibit the number of their men, shops, and professions. . . . They shall all . . . on foot, and on horseback, with . . . music, pass before Alayköshk, that I may see how many thousand men and how many guilds there are. It shall be an *alay* [procession] the like of which never was seen before. A general description shall be made of all the . . . mosques, . . . colleges, houses for reading the Koran, and houses for reading the tradition, schools, convents, ... baths, magazines [stores], caravanserais [inns for people and their animals], palaces of the vezirs [government officials] and great men, fountains, establishments for distributing water, conduits, cisterns, quarters of Moslems, Christians, and Jews, churches and synagogues, ovens for bread and biscuits, water, wind and horsemills, halls . . . of all the houses, gardens, . . . and all the monuments to be found in the four districts. . . . Those who make the description shall be men of impartial character; if the contrary should be found I shall order them to be quartered." . . .

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* From Evliya Chelebi, *Narrative of Travels in Europe, Asia and Africa*, trans. J. von Hammer (London, 1834), as quoted in Lewis, *op. cit.*, pp. 112–15.

The description of Constantinople and all its suburbs and villages on both sides of the Bosphorus was completed in three months. It formed a complete book, bearing the title *Description of Constantinople*. The historiographer Solakzade read it day and night in the presence of the Sultan, who exclaimed, "O my God! let this town flourish to the end of time." . . .

The following is [an excerpt from] the description of the excellent town of Constantinople.

"Under the four Mollas of Constantinople . . . justice is transacted at 670 tribunals. Great mosques of the Sultans, 74. Great mosques of the Vezirs, 1,985. Small mosques of the town-quarters, 6,990. Other mosques great and small, 6,665. Dining establishments for the poor, 19. Hospitals, 9. Primary schools, 1,993. Houses for reading the Koran, 55. Houses for delivering the tradition [of the Prophet Mohammed], 135. Great convents, 557. Cells and rooms of Dervishes [religious mystics], 6,000. Sick-houses for strangers, 91. Caravanserais, 997. Khans [hotels] of merchants, 565. Khans for single men, 676. Quarters of Moslems, 990. Quarters of Greeks, 354. Quarters of Jews, 657. Quarters of Franks, 17. Quarters of Armenians, 27. Palaces of Vezirs, 6,890. Baths public and private, 14,536. Fountains public and private, 9,995. Water-pipes, 989. Establishments for distributing water, 200. Fountains sweet and bitter, 100. Wells, 60,000. Cisterns, 55. . . . Covered markets, 3. Flour-halls, 37. . . . Repositories for grinding coffee, 2. Repository for silk, 1. Repository for wax, 1. Repository for gold-wire, 1. Repository of the customhouse, 1. Repository of the land customhouse, 1. Repository for oil, 1. Repository for fish, 1. Repository for salt, 1. Repository for biscuits, 1. Repository for wine, 1. Repository for powder, 1. Repository for prisoners, 1. The Imperial Mint, 1. Magazine for cloth, 1. Magazine for corn, 1. Magazine for barley, 1. The magazines of Bayezid, of Suleyman, of wood, of horses, of flour, and of hay; of each, 1. The stables of the palace and at Wefa, 1. The Armory, 1. Prisons of State, 4. Prisons for criminals, 4. Ovens, 600. Windmills, 600. Watermills, 28. Houses of the inspectors of provisions, of vegetables, of mutton, of the Inspector of the town, of the Inspector of the kitchen, of salted meat, of slaughterhouses. Barracks of the Janissaries, old and new, . . . 162. Barracks of . . . the armorers and the caulkers. The Arsenal and the barracks of the bombardiers. . . . One house for yoghurt. The paper factory of Battal, 1. The royal lion-house, 1. Houses for dyeing, 70. Houses for silverware, 10. The musket factory, 1. Leadenhall, 1. The music-house, 1. House of the tent-pitchers, 1. . . . House of the painters, 1. House for the water-carriers, 1. for the gunners, 1; for the founders, 1; for the tailors, 1; for the waggoners, 1; for the fireworkers, 1; for the exercise of the Janissaries, 1; for the Samsunji, keepers of the great dogs, 1; for the Zagarji, or keepers of the pointers, 1; . . . for the falconers, 1; for the head of the goldsmiths, 1; for the kettle-makers, 1; for the button-makers, 1; for the saddlers, 1; for the glass-makers, 1; for the head of the merchants, 2; for the vinegar-makers, 1; for the confectioners of sour fruits, 1."

Atatuk's Reforms

•§*Editor's Introduction:* When the Ottoman Empire was defeated during World War I, it was not entirely destroyed but was pushed back to the borders of modern-day Turkey. Its archaic institutions and corrupt leadership proved unable to deal with the collapse of the empire and invasion by the Greeks. The future looked dim for Turkey until the meteoric rise of a young man named Mustafa Kemal. Mustafa, later known as Ataturk, "father of the Turks," formed and led a people's army that drove the Greek invaders out and declared Turkey a republic.

A brilliant, charismatic, and sometimes ruthless leader, Ataturk came to wield almost absolute power in Turkey. With an iron will, he set out to modernize his country. By alternating persuasion and force, Ataturk, in the period from the end of World War I to his death in 1938, brought radical changes to Turkey, shaking his country out of the corruptions and superstitions of the dying Ottoman Empire and bringing it again to life in a modern, Western mold. One of his major changes involved the abolition of the caliphate, the religious administration of Islam, which had wielded great political power through the theocratic Ottoman period. By abolishing the caliphate, Ataturk separated church and state and provided the basis for the secular Turkey of today.

In the following selection, a Turkish journalist recounts the bold means by which Ataturk confronted the reactionary institutions in his country and gives a summary of Ataturk's major reforms. Which of these reforms do you think are the most important? Can you think of any major reforms that might be made in America today?§•

From *Turkey in My Time*, by Ahmed Emin Yalman, pp. 170, 172–81. Copyright 1956 by the University of Oklahoma Press.

ATATURK WAS ILL—dangerously ill. What would happen? The outside world held the opinion that his achievements were purely personal, that there would be no continuity to new Turkey after his death. . . . Patriotic Turks loved him for saving the country and making possible a new national existence, and they excused any error he might have committed. Although they had faith in the continuity of their national life, the danger of losing Ataturk filled them with deep anxiety in addition to their sorrow. . . .

I left Turkey in October, 1938, for America. . . .

When we [Turks] arrived in Milan, on our way to Paris, a railway conductor gave me the terrible news of the death of Ataturk.

Mustafa Kemal Ataturk dead! That such a man of inexhaustible vitality, creative power, iron will, and humane heart should cease to exist among those who lived sounded unbelievable. His long illness had prepared us for the end. Still, the actual news was a shock. We wept; all the Turks on the train wept; an entire nation wept for months. . . .

Although the whole world has heard of Ataturk and admired his great work, the meaning and scope of his accomplishments have not been fully understood. . . .

[A summary of his major reforms follows.]

I have already described the manner in which he abolished the caliphate and the . . . authority of religion, opening wide the avenues of reason for the advance of science, education, and justice, hitherto saddled with religious dogma. He made secularism a going policy in Turkey, more so than in most advanced countries, leaving religion its proper function as a source of altruism and love, but preventing it from being used as an unfair and reactionary tool in politics.

Religion had hampered the freedom and equality of women by depriving them of opportunities for public activity. Ataturk gave them equal political rights with men and opened all professions and offices to them. . . . In Turkey today there is a larger proportion of women judges, lawyers, architects, engineers, chemists, and high-ranking government officials than anywhere else in the world. Usually people are surprised to learn that the assistant head of the aviation school run by the Turkish Air League, confined exclusively to military aviators during World War I, was for some time a woman pilot with an iron sense of discipline and duty.

After the reforms in religion and the status of women, a sweeping change in personal attire, itself a symbol of the old, narrow life, was introduced. The Turks had adopted European dress for men about one hundred years earlier, but had kept the red fez [a tall, red cylindrical hat] as a sign of Ottoman distinction. The conservative mind clung to it as its last symbol of religious and political difference from the Christian West. Ataturk, on the contrary, thought that there should be no symbol of difference. The fez had to go. . . .

Ataturk chose a remarkable way for eliminating the fez. He singled out Kastamonu, a town north of Ankara reputed to be the most conservative community in Turkey, as the place to inaugurate this phase of his program and arranged there a meeting with noted reactionaries of the town.

"I have brought you some nice presents," he told them on arrival. "Look at them. They are called hats, a much more suitable headgear than the fez as protection against sun and rain."

The men were startled and terrified at the prospect of wearing hats. All of them said they could not accept the gifts. "But why?" asked Ataturk. . . .

When a group of pious conservatives led by Ataturk, all wearing hats, took a stroll through the main street of the town, people could not believe their eyes. . . . [Afterward] in all communities the radicals started to wear hats. . . . Then a law was passed forbidding the wearing of the fez. Here and there the law met silent resistance, but there was no open manifestation of it. A reform thought impossible had taken place simply and smoothly. . . .

The change in the alphabet was another sweeping reform by Ataturk. The complicated Arabic characters, so long used by the Turks, were one of the main causes of illiteracy. Adoption of the Latin alphabet had been a wish in the hearts of a few radicals, perhaps, but it was hardly a subject for public discussion. To change the alphabet would be a tremendously difficult and unpopular job. But Ataturk called a conference of writers and leading authorities to consider language problems. The majority approved the adoption of Latin characters.

"How long a period of transition do you foresee?" Ataturk asked them.

"About fifteen years," was the almost unanimous answer.

"No," said Ataturk. "It must be completed in six months."

The entire country became a school to teach the new alphabet. Evening classes were compulsory for men up to sixty and women up to fifty years old. Ataturk was one of the teachers. From partly Arabic and partly Latin, the newspapers went, in a few months, to entirely Latin characters. . . .

As a rule, Turks had no family names and were called by their given names. There were no surnames to denote a common family bond. . . . To differentiate a man from others with the same given name, it was necessary to add detailed information about him, such as "son of," "native of," and so on.

A law passed in 1935 made it compulsory for every Turk to adopt and register a family name. Mustafa Kemal was given the name of Ataturk by the Grand National Assembly. Ataturk gave General Ismet the surname "Inonu," in honor of his victory in the battles of Inonu. Everyone used his imagination and wits in selecting his own name. I spent hours searching in a dictionary for a . . . name [with a beautiful sound] without a poor meaning. "Yalman," meaning "the highest summit of a mountain," seemed to be all right. It sounded pretentious, but most people were taking pretentious names. As long as they could choose, they took the best.

During the period of these reforms, much had been achieved in the economic field through two five-year plans and by the creation of government banks as holding institutions for a number of separate industrial undertakings on a public-utility basis. A new generation of Turks interested in economics was reared, and the experiment was successful, at least in its honeymoon stage, while effort was concentrated on following the better practices of private business and avoiding red tape. Unfortunately, the new business techniques practiced in the government banks—the selection of men on the basis of fitness and efficiency, and the system of paying living wages and encouraging initiative and merit by prompt increases in salary and position—were not applied even to a small degree in the government bureaus. This lack of harmony in two different fields of government activity was one of the reasons why the progressive measures were short-lived. . . .

Ataturk saw the necessity for an opposition party. An attempt was made on two occasions to encourage another party, but the whole thing was done badly and half-heartedly. Ataturk insisted he was not neutral as the head of state, that he had to insure control by his own side. Under such circumstances, a free system could hardly be expected to have a chance.

Ataturk struggled fiercely not to become a dictator in spite of his personal power and prestige. The one purge, made under the pressure of a crisis which seriously threatened the regime, resulted in so much disgust and unpopularity that it was never repeated. On the contrary, all Turks living outside of Turkey were granted the right to re-enter their homeland. . . .

The new regime exhibited democracy in form, but with a stiff dose of personal power and inefficient bureaucracy. Fortunately most of the personal power was used in the public interest and within the framework of the laws as far as possible. . . .

The main contribution of Ataturk to the prosperity, progress, and survival of the Turkish nation is not confined to the sweeping reforms most widely publicized abroad. More fully, it consists of his liquidation of all tendencies toward . . . imperialism, militarism, and extreme nationalism in Turkey, preaching the doctrine that all imperialism is a liability, . . . that the Turks should be busy for hundreds of years solely in developing their own homeland . . . and that anything diverting attention from this task would be a national danger for Turkey. . . .

The remarkable feature of the whole thing is the fact that this respect for decency and this hatred of militarism were sponsored by one of the most successful and brilliant military masters in history. The world situation offered to Ataturk many occasions when he might have used his genius for personal

The Philosophy of the Revolution

Be a lion at home
and a fox abroad.
—Persian proverb

◆*Editor's Introduction:* Unlike the reforms in Turkey, which were essentially an internal struggle against the corruption of the decaying, imperialistic Ottoman Empire, the revolution in Egypt had as its primary goal full independence from British involvement in Egyptian affairs and control of the Suez Canal. Many Egyptian nationalists believed that internal reforms could not take place until the British were ousted from Egypt. A popular revolution in 1919, after a promising start, failed to bring about lasting reforms, and internal corruption in the Egyptian Government worsened in the 1930's and 1940's. It was in this atmosphere of disappointment and bitterness that the famous Egyptian leader Gamal Abdel Nasser grew up.

As a young schoolboy in Cairo, Nasser was on the streets protesting his government's restrictions on its citizens, and it was during these early years that he became an ardent Arab nationalist. Nasser was most concerned about British influence over Egyptian politics, British control of the Suez Canal, and the establishment of a Western-backed country, Israel, in the heart of the Arab lands. After the revolution of 1952, which toppled the corrupt government of King Farouk, Nasser emerged as the voice of the people of Egypt. He instituted land reforms and managed to remove the British from the Suez Canal in 1956. His subsequent attempts to bring about Arab unity, through the short-lived Egyptian-Syrian union of 1958–61 and his sponsorship of many

Gamal Abdel Nasser, *Egypt's Liberation: The Philosophy of the Revolution* (Washington, D.C., Public Affairs Press, 1955), pp. 105–14.

Pan-Arab conferences, reflected his belief in the need for Arab solidarity in the face of other world power blocs.

In the following excerpt from his book *Egypt's Liberation: The Philosophy of the Revolution,* Nasser discusses his theory that Egypt is inextricably bound to the Arab world, to the African continent, and to the Islamic world. In Nasser's view, Egypt cannot forget these ties in developing a nationalistic policy of its own. It is interesting to note that in this piece, written about twenty years ago, Nasser mentions the possibility of using Arab oil as a weapon in world power politics, which was finally undertaken in 1973. Why does Nasser feel that Egypt must look beyond its own borders? Why does he feel threatened by Britain's Balfour Declaration and the promise of a homeland for the Jews in Palestine? ❧

A ROLE IN SEARCH OF A HERO

[I REMEMBER] A famous tale by a great Italian poet, Luigi Pirandello—"Six Characters in Search of an Author." The pages of history are full of heroes who created for themselves roles of glorious valor which they played at decisive moments. Likewise the pages of history are also full of heroic and glorious roles which never found heroes to perform them. For some reason it seems to me that within the Arab circle there is a role, wandering aimlessly in search of a hero. . . .

Here, let me hasten to say that this role is not one of leadership. . . . It is a role such as to spark [the] tremendous power latent in the area surrounding us . . . with the aim of creating a great strength which will then undertake a positive part in the building of the future of mankind.

THE FIRST CIRCLE

There can be no doubt that the Arab circle is the most important, and the one with which we are most closely linked. For its peoples are intertwined with us by history. We have suffered together, we have gone through the same crises, and when we fell beneath the hooves of the invaders' steeds, they were with us under the same hooves.

We are also bound in this circle by a common religion.

The center of Islamic learning has always moved within the orbit of its several capital cities—first Mecca, then shifting to . . . Damascus, next to Baghdad, and finally to Cairo.

Lastly, the fact that the Arab states are contiguous has joined them together in a geographical framework made solid by all these historical, material and spiritual factors. . . .

[When we speak of our latent power] we make the wrong definition of strength. It is not strength to shout at the top of the lungs: real strength lies in acting positively with all the effective means at our command. When I try to analyze the elements of our strength, there are three main sources which should first be taken into account.

The first of these sources is that we are a community of neighboring peoples linked by all the material and moral ties possible, and that we have characteristics and abilities and a civilization which have given rise to three holy religions—factors which cannot be ignored in the effort to build a secure and peaceful world. So much for the first source.

As for the second source of strength, it is our land itself and its position on the map—that important, strategic position which embraces the crossroads of the world, the thoroughfare of its traders and the passageway of its armies.

There remains the third source: oil—a sinew of material civilization without which all its machines would cease to function. The great factories, producing every kind of goods; all the instruments of land, sea, and air communication; all the weapons of war, from the mechanical bird above the clouds to the submarine beneath the waves—without oil, all would turn back to naked metal, covered with rust, incapable of motion or use.

Here I would like to pause for a moment to deal with the subject of oil. . . .

I read recently an article published by the University of Chicago on the world oil situation. It would be a good thing if every Arab could read it, grasp its implication, and see the great significance revealed by its statistics.

The article points out, for example, that in the Arab countries the effort to extract oil requires comparatively little capital. . . . According to the article, it all adds up to the fact that the cost of producing a barrel of oil in North America is 78 cents, in South America, 48 cents, but in the Arab countries the cost is only 10 cents.

The article further says that the center of world oil production has shifted from the United States, where oil wells are going dry, where the cost of land is going up and the wages of workers have risen, to the Arab area, where the fields are still virgin, where vast tracts of land continue to cost almost nothing, and where labor is comparatively cheap. . . .

It is a fact, too, that the average daily production per well is 11 barrels in the United States, 230 barrels in Venezuela, and 4,000 barrels in the Arab area. Have I made clear how great is the importance of this element of strength? I hope so.

So we are strong. Strong not in the loudness of our voices when we wail or shout for help, but rather . . . from the ties binding us together, making our land a single region from which no part can withdraw, and of which no part, like an isolated island, can be defended without defense of the whole.

THE INTERIOR OF THE DARK CONTINENT

So much for the first circle in which we must turn, and in which we must act with all our ability—the Arab circle.

If we consider next the second circle—the continent of Africa—I may say without exaggeration that we cannot, under any circumstances, however much we might desire it, remain aloof from the terrible and sanguinary conflict going on there today between five million whites and 200 million Africans. We cannot do so for an important and obvious reason: we are *in* Africa. The peoples of Africa will continue to look to us, who guard their northern gate, and who constitute their link with the outside world. . . .

There remains another important reason. It is that the Nile is the life artery of our country, bringing water from the heart of the continent.

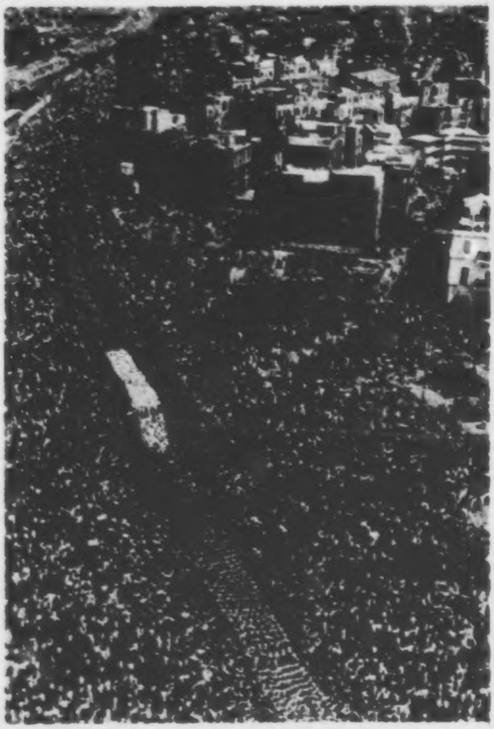
As a final reason, the boundaries of our beloved brother, the Sudan, extend far into the depths of Africa, bringing into continuity the politically sensitive regions in that area. . . .

We shall not, in any circumstance, be able to stand idly by in the face of what is going on [in Africa today] in the false belief that it will not affect or concern us. . . .

ISLAMIC PARLIAMENT

There remains the third circle, which circumscribes continents and oceans, and which is the domain of our brothers in faith, who, wherever under the sun they may be, turn as we do in the direction of Mecca, and whose devout lips speak the same prayers. . . .

When I consider the 80 million Muslims in Indonesia, and the 50 million in China, and the millions in Malaya, Siam, and Burma, and the nearly 100 million in Pakistan, and the more than 100 million in the Middle East, and the 40 million in the Soviet Union, together with the other millions in far-flung parts of the world—when I consider these hundreds of millions united by a single creed, I emerge with a sense of tre-



Rarely has a leader been regarded with such reverence as Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt. Hundreds of thousands of Egyptians attended his funeral in October, 1970.

mendous possibilities which we might realize through the cooperation of all these Muslims, a cooperation going not beyond the bounds of their natural loyalty to their own countries, but nonetheless enabling them and their brothers in faith to wield power wisely and without limit.

And now I go back to that wandering mission in search of a hero to play it. Here is the role. Here are the lines, and here is the stage. We alone, by virtue of our place, can perform the role.

After the Revolution: Algerian Self-Government

Editor's Introduction: The Algerian revolution was successfully completed in 1962. After eight years of bitter guerrilla warfare and mass demonstrations, the French finally turned the reins of the government over to the Algerians. As would be expected, the task of running a country after so much disruption and destruction was tremendous, especially as the Algerians lacked trained manpower as a result of the French colonial policy of educating only enough Algerians to fill the low-level civil-service posts.

Ahmed Ben Bella, the revolutionary whom we met in an earlier selection, after his arrest escaped to Egypt, where he helped to organize shipments of weapons to rebels in Algeria. Later he became the first leader of independent Algeria and faced the task of inspiring the masses of people, who were used to being kept in their place and led by others, to work for themselves. One way of doing this was to strive for visible accomplishments, things people could see and talk about and take courage from. Once inspired, they would regain their hope for the future and their determination to build a new and strong nation. At the same time, people had to be made to realize how difficult change is, so that they would not expect to achieve success instantly and without hard work and dedication.

In the following selection, Ben Bella describes some of his first steps toward rebuilding his country after a century of coloniza-

Robert Merle, *Ahmed Ben Bella* (New York: Walker and Co., 1967), pp. 142–45, 149–58. Copyright © 1965 by Éditions Gallimard (Paris) and reprinted by permission.

tion by the French and years of bloody revolution. How does Ben Bella defend a one-party system? How does he deal with the problems Algeria faced after independence?

THE SITUATION IN Algeria, after seven years of war, was appalling. The country had been bled dry, and everything was dislocated. The [French extremists who most actively resisted Algerian independence] had blown up schools with plastic bombs, burnt down the library of Algiers University, and destroyed tons of administrative files. Thousands of teachers had abandoned their posts. . . . The massive exodus of nine-tenths of the French population of Algeria in the summer of 1962 had brought a collapse of the economic structure. Out of ten million Algerians, there were two million unemployed, including over two hundred and fifty thousand in the town of Algiers alone. Urban unemployment had been aggravated by an influx of starving people from the country districts. . . .

The problem of this army of urban unemployed was well-nigh insoluble: there was not, and there would not be for a very long time, enough industry to absorb them. It was therefore necessary to try and convince them that they must return to the land. Before all else, we had to reorganize the agricultural sector, both to provide the unemployed with work and to ensure the country's food supplies. "Operation Ploughing," was therefore our first battle.

The operation was launched on the 15th September, and after a month and a half it suffered a grave setback. We had made a serious mistake, and the situation was critical. The socialist countries had promised to send us tractors, and the press and radio had already announced their arrival. In the minds of the *fellaheen* [peasants] this meant that other people were coming to do the ploughing for them: consequently, nobody did any more work. Nobody in the local administration took even the smallest initiative; everyone was waiting for the tractors.

I decided to adopt radical methods. I summoned a meeting of the [agricultural leaders] in Algiers. . . . I explained to them that we had just got to roll up our shirt-sleeves and start ploughing with anything which was available. . . .

Whenever a breakdown was reported to me, I would rush off to the site and investigate: if the need arose, I would penalize the incompetent administrator, without going through the formality of advising my Minister of the Interior. I requisitioned seed, ploughs, and tractors on the spot. These were unorthodox methods which were censured by some people, who could only shout "Dictatorship!" But which was preferable, to respect the formalities and lose the battle of "Operation Ploughing," or to disregard them and win it?

In the end, we won it. The ploughing and sowing were finished within our time limit; in addition, the rains were favorable, and in 1963 we had a magnificent harvest. . . .

Underdeveloped countries are, indeed, extremely vulnerable. Most of them exist solely by the production of some one kind of agricultural raw material: in Cuba, for instance, it is sugar. In certain African countries it is coffee; it is wine in Algeria, jute in Pakistan, and cotton in Egypt. Now, the price of these raw materials is fixed, not in the capital city where they are sold, but in the capitals of the West, where they are bought. It follows that the underdeveloped countries are always dependent, . . . always exploited, and the disparity between their standard of living and that of the great industrial countries, far from becoming smaller with the passage of time, is merely aggravated. The great nations can ease their consciences by allowing two, three, or many more political parties: it is flattering to them and creates a good impression. . . . But we are still an impoverished and illiterate people, . . . and we are not strong enough to allow ourselves to play such a sophisticated game. In our country, it could only lead to confusion, division, and anarchy; or even worse, to the surreptitious and unwarrantable interference by a foreign power in the fight for votes. We needed a single party which could unite and lead all the country's different elements: a party which could act, and act quickly, to make up for lost time in the reorganization of the social and economic structure from top to bottom. . . .

The sight of swarms of thin and ragged children on their knees at the feet of healthy adults, removing the filth from their boots, had always seemed to me symbolic of the humiliation of the "natives" in underdeveloped countries. . . .

I know exactly what the answer . . . would have been from a theoretical socialist: the only practical solution to the problem of the shoeshine boys is an economic one. Abolish unemployment, and the exploitation of children will cease automatically. Suppress the cause, and the effect will disappear. That is the orthodox answer which, though economically correct, is not acceptable in terms of human beings. It would take years to eradicate the cause, and meanwhile the shoeshine boys would be abandoned to filth and disease, illiteracy and humiliation. . . .

I therefore resigned myself to doing that which all good economists condemn: I decided to attack the effect rather than the cause. . . . We decided to assemble the shoeshine boys in the Salle Ibn Khaldoun and, after explaining our plan to them, to distribute them among different rehabilitation centers. The operation was carried out amid the delirious enthusiasm of the Algerian people, and was a very great success. . . . There can be no question of tolerating the renewal of such a degrading profession in free Algeria. Arrogant and lazy people will have to do as I do: buy a brush, and clean their own shoes.

The framework of our welfare campaign also included the provision of homes for old men, . . . for women, and a home for elderly couples at Sidi-Moussa. At the time when my government was formed, there were hundreds and hundreds of old men and women sleeping under the arcades of Algiers. I was working until very late at night at that time, and before going to bed between one and two in the morning, I used always to be driven round the town to get some fresh air. Human shapes lay stretched out everywhere, motionless, and wrapped in rags. In the shadows of the arcades they looked like corpses of people who had dropped dead in the struggle for life, and night after night my heart ached to see them in such numbers. It was a happy day for me when, after having opened the various centers which I have mentioned, the order went out to collect these poor wretches and settle them in the homes which awaited them.

We carried out these operations because, quite simply, they satisfied one of the deeply felt longings of the Algerian

Ahmed Ben Bella, the first President of independent Algeria, liked to get out of his office and visit the people. Here Ben Bella and Nasser visit a nationalized farm taken over from the French. In the Middle East it is considered perfectly natural for good friends of the same sex to hold hands.

people; but we were fully aware that the essential problem still remained to be solved. Our people had just emerged from a hundred and thirty years of darkness and neglect; they needed to have visible and tangible proof that the Algerian authorities were really working for their good. They expected affection and care from the first Algerian government of Algeria. . . .

I had never appreciated this state of mind so fully as when I was going my rounds by car. I was driving through a small village one day when I found the *fellaheen* building a mosque, so I decided to stop, and I got out of the car. I was recognized at once and immediately surrounded by village people. We had started talking when an old man came up to me and said: "Ahmed! At last you have come! But you have been too long coming to see us—why have you been such a long time? You have been President for months now, and we have been waiting and waiting for you." I said to him: "My father, Algeria is a big country, and there are over a thousand large villages. Even if I visited three a day every day of the year, and did nothing else, it would take me over a year. So just think what a long time it would take me to visit twenty thousand small villages such as yours." "Yes, yes," said the old man, "you are right, Ahmed. Nevertheless, we have been waiting and waiting." And the crowd around him agreed with what he had said.

It was because I could feel the pulse of the people that I knew that immediate action was needed to stop abuse. It was necessary to use somewhat unorthodox, or quite simply revolutionary, methods. The price of meat and vegetables suddenly started to soar during January and February 1963, at the time of *Ramadan* [the Islamic month of fasting]. I instituted an inquiry and discovered that these cruel and abusive rises in price were the work of the market middlemen. . . .

The war, Revolution, and Independence had passed these gentlemen by without leaving a mark on them. Having lent money to the farmers to finance the planting of certain vegetables, they were in control of the crops, which were thus already mortgaged to them. This enabled them to sit at their telephones and gamble (on a certainty) on the rising prices. They would telephone to the growers, saying: "Do not bring any tomatoes today." Then there would be a tomato shortage, the price would rise, and when it had reached the desired level, the middlemen would once more open the flood-gates.

They achieved the same results by an even simpler procedure, that of "stocking." Instead of distributing a certain vegetable in the market, they would keep back stocks of it. One day, I went down to the market myself, summoned the middlemen and said to them: "I am told that there are no more onions in the market. But I have just seen quantities of them in your stores." "Mr. President," they said, smiling politely, "we cannot touch those, they are for stocking." "For stocking?" I asked. "What does that mean?" "It means, Mr. President, that they are sold." Perfectly correct bills were at once produced, signed by nonexistent men. "Very good," I said, "everything is in order." They smiled [at] each other as they watched me leaving.

But the next day the smiles disappeared when I returned at the head of a crowd of two thousand children. I showed them the famous "stocks" of onions, and said to them: "Get going! Today, everything is free. Now is the moment to replenish the larders of your families." Then the children flung themselves on the stocks of onions: wherever they had passed, there was no longer an onion to be seen. As I left, I said to these gentlemen: "I'll be back tomorrow with four thousand children." But it was not necessary; they had realized that the splendid game of "stocking" could no longer be played in the new Algeria. . . .

[There was a] paradoxical and intolerable situation which was general in Algeria at that time. Political power was in the hands of the Algerians; but economic power, including the land itself, was still in the hands of Europeans. They were still in possession of their vast estates and they continued to exploit the *fellah* [peasant], as in the past. It was clear that this state of affairs was contrary to even the most elementary ideas of justice. As long as Algerian soil was still in the hands of the big landowners, whether French or Algerian, the words "Independence" and "Revolution" made no sense. . . .

In March 1963, my government promulgated the decree nationalizing the majority of the big landed properties. Some of the *colons* [French settlers], at the time of the Evian agreements [between France and Algeria, which led to Algerian independence] had sabotaged their machinery, burned their harvests, and destroyed their stocks before leaving the country. As there was now some anxiety that the big estates might be sabotaged by their dispossessed owners, it was decided to take possession of them before the decree was made public. The [liberation army] in a remarkably secret and well-organized manner, marched on the big estates very early one morning and occupied them, calling upon their owners to leave. This is how [the wealthy Frenchman] Borgeaud's famous [estate] was nationalized. . . .

There was an outburst of joy throughout the whole country, and I must confess that I had never felt so happy in all my life. The land had come back to the people who cultivated it and Algeria had taken a decisive step on the road to socialism. . . . I was told that Borgeaud, whose name symbolized French colonialism to the Algerian people, was "very surprised" by the blow which had struck him. He immediately left for France, where, presumably, every comfort awaited him. I visited [his estate] after his departure. The house was so astonishing, and so typical, that I decided that not a stick of furniture, not a book, not an ornament was to be moved. My intention is to preserve Borgeaud's house just as he left it, and to turn it into a museum where future generations of Algerians will be able to see how the great feudal lords lived, in the days when we were their serfs.

There was great danger that the richest of the Algerians would replace the French propertied classes and constitute [a] class which would continue to keep the masses in a state of poverty. After the Evian agreements, a certain number of properties, both in the towns and in the country, had passed from the hands of Europeans into those of Algerian businessmen. These properties had been bought at low prices, and the Algerians had then proceeded to cash in on them with a greed which fairly equaled that of their predecessors. During the months which followed the decrees of March, my government was called on to nationalize not only farms, but hotels, restaurants, cafés, and business concerns which had belonged to Algerians for a short time only.

We had never at any moment envisaged turning these nationalized properties into state-controlled concerns. It was up to the workers to elect their own managerial staff and direct their own undertakings. In the forum, democracy was no longer a formal political game, dominated by the money power, but had taken its place where it ought to be: at the foundations, on the actual working-sites, in the solid relationship between [labor and management], and in the equitable distribution of profits. From now on, the state could only intervene in the process in the capacity of counselor. . . .

Oil in Kuwait

Editor's Introduction: In addition to revolutionary political activity, dramatic economic change has come to the Middle East. Discoveries of vast quantities of oil and natural gas have brought sudden wealth to many countries. Nowhere has the effect of this sudden wealth been more dramatic than in Kuwait, a country about the size of New Jersey, on the Persian Gulf. Less than thirty years ago, Kuwait was desperately poor. The majority of its 910,000 inhabitants subsisted by diving for pearls from sunup to sundown or by grazing goats out in the desert. There were almost no cars, only dirt roads, and few hotels.

The discovery of large oil deposits has brought astounding changes to this desert country. Where mud houses and shops once stood, modern, air-conditioned hotels and office buildings now rise. Kuwait's vast amounts of money have enabled it to buy technical expertise as well with which to attack its problems. Kuwait now has the second highest per capita income in the world, at $10,000 twice that of the United States, though far lower than Abu Dhabi's $40,000.

Instead of being overwhelmed by their riches, the Kuwaitis have set up a welfare state that is the envy of the world. All Kuwaiti citizens receive free medical care and free education through college. They pay no taxes and no water or telephone bills. Basic foods are subsidized to keep prices down, and every Kuwaiti who cannot find private employment is guaranteed a government job at $500 per month. Every Kuwaiti who wishes to buy a house is assured of a twenty-five year bank loan.

Adapted from Hakon Mielche, *Lands of Aladdin* (London: W. Hodge, 1955), pp. 90–100.

Of course, in time, Kuwait's 60 billion barrels of oil reserves will run dry, but the Kuwaitis are planning for the future and are well on their way to becoming the financial and service center of the Middle East. To aid less fortunate Middle Eastern countries, they have helped establish a development bank. They have also established the Kuwait Investment Company, which lends money and invests in projects all over the world—for example, the KIC is in the process of constructing an office building, hotel, and parking garage in Atlanta, Georgia.

Kuwait's rags-to-riches story is typical of the changes taking place in other small, oil-rich Middle Eastern states, such as Bahrein, Abu Dhabi, and Qatar, and to a lesser extent in larger states, such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Libya. The Kuwaitis seem to have solved all their basic problems except the heat, and the latest rumor is that they are considering putting a dome over all of Kuwait City in order to air-condition it!

The selection that follows takes a closer look at some of the changes that have come to Kuwait since the discovery of oil. Would you like to live in Kuwait? What problems might develop as a result of the government's providing so many services for its people? Do you think the U.S. government should provide similar services for its people? ❧

FIFTEEN YEARS AGO very few people had ever heard of Kuwait. [Now, because of its great oil wealth, almost everyone has.] The present ruler . . . has been in on the whole great oil adventure, for when it began he was the [country's] finance minister, a minister with a very [small budget]. Now, [twenty-five] years after the first well began to gush, Kuwait has become the [second] richest country in the world. . . .

It is easy enough to earn money, but to make sensible use of it is [difficult]. The Sheik of the Bahrein Islands has the same difficulty. He, too, is overwhelmed with money and is trying to invest it in what will prove of permanent benefit to his people. His people, however, . . . want big shiny American cars today, or tomorrow at the very latest. . . .

The poor man is more aware of his poverty when he can see what his more favored countrymen are able to afford. [Not so very long] ago the differences between the classes were not so striking or so obvious. Camels and donkeys were the only means of transport, and in the shops of the bazaar there were only necessities to tempt people. If you were thirsty you drank tepid brackish water or coffee, whether you were Sheik or beggar. Nowadays, the shops in the bazaar and the big new ones outside have all sorts of luxuries to arouse your desires. You earn more money than before, but on the other hand prices rise every time you have a little extra. . . .

In the old days those who could write confined their art to inscribing the wisdom of the Koran on parchment, but now posters with photographs of elegant men proclaim from every shop in the bazaar that you are not properly dressed without a Parker 51. . . .

Those who cannot afford a car . . . save up and buy a bicycle. There are no more fantastic ones in the world than those that dash about the narrow streets of Kuwait, a constant danger to all traffic. The transition from camel to automobile and bicycle has come too swiftly for the people to be able to adjust. . . .

The bicyclists fondle their new animals. They deck them out like camels, hanging saddle bags of Persian carpet over the bar, . . . and the . . . handlebars are beautified with lovely golden fringes. The whole frame is covered with bands of colored Scotch tape. . . . I have examined some parked bicycles which had thirty-six reflectors gleaming in the sunlight all the way from one mudguard to the other. . . .

I saw young Bedouins with black locks reaching to their shoulders and dressed in all the voluminous garb of the desert who with that wore brown suede shoes and Swiss watches which showed the date and wound themselves up automatically. . . .

Dreams of a new Arab Empire are again being dreamed, but before these desert countries can get anywhere they must have water and knowledge, especially water to make the desert blossom. Kuwait has great plans for tapping the Shattel-Arab, the broad river of the combined waters of Euphrates and Tigris from the mouth of which water is now shipped in barrels and tanks to Kuwait. Someday in the future, however, it will be brought in pipes overland. . . . With the help of that water they will cultivate the golden desert. Irrigation channels will crisscross the desert, and Kuwait will become a new Eden flowing with milk and honey.

There is much to be done at home, however. . . . They have now solved the problem of drinking water, for, after centuries of making do with sunk wells, which only yielded muddy, brackish water, they have used some of the oil money to build the largest distilling plant in the world. This sucks in sea water through thick pipes, boils it, traps the steam and cools it into crystal-clear drinking water free of all microbes.

The plant has a capacity of a million gallons a day, enough to provide the entire town with all the water it needs and that of a quality it has never known before. . . .

The distilling plant, of course, can be expanded. In fact, they reckon that one day it will be producing five times the present quantity. After that you will not hear any more the cry of the waterseller in the streets, offering Shattel-Arab water from a goat skin draped across a donkey's back, or poured into old [gasoline cans]. There is no doubt that this distilled [water], good as sterile water, is going to make a tremendous improvement in the town's health. Typhus, dysentery, and intestinal parasites, which you get from water and milk, are [greatly] on the decline; the Kuwaitis are waging war against the myriads of flies which carry trachoma [an eye disease] from person to person.

Kuwait's hospital service has come into being as swiftly as all the other things. [In the 1950's] they built a hospital of 250 beds. [Now] there are [many hospitals of more than] 750 beds. . . . Clinics for outpatients have been started in the town, and they treat some 60,000 patients a month. . . . A sanatorium for . . . tubercular patients [has been built]. There are . . . school doctors with assistants and nurses and a miniature army of specially trained women who spend all their time treating the . . . trachoma patients. There are motorized clinics that drive round to the desert towns and visit Bedouin camps to see if any help is needed, but now they are thinking of replacing these by permanent clinics and medical stores in . . . villages round about in the desert. . . .

Enlightenment is what is needed most. It is not enough [in the modern world] just to be able to read the Koran and write your own name; . . . and so Kuwait is building schools with much of the oil money.

Sheik Yussuf ben-Iser built the first . . . school, where boys could learn more than to read the Koran. There was no state [treasury] in those days, so when he got the idea, Sheik Yussuf went to the merchants and pearl dealers of Kuwait and spoke to them so persuasively of the advantages of having children who knew more than the older generations that they nodded agreement and clubbed together to contribute a certain sum. They decided in their wisdom that half of the amount was to be used to build a school, and the other half to buy or build boats which would go out in the summer and fish for pearls at the banks, and the proceeds from the pearls they got were to be the school's revenue. The school was started in 1922 and proved a success. Progressive Egypt provided the teachers.

Five years later another school was started. Instruction was given in religion, arithmetic, Arabic, and business practice, and when prospecting for oil began in 1936, science and geography were added to the curriculum. In 1941 there were four schools, and the war had put a temporary stop to prospecting. It was discovered that the revenue from the pearl boats no longer covered the cost of the schools, so the merchants voluntarily paid an income tax of one-half percent. . . .

Today Kuwait has [over 100] schools, a technical school, a business college, and a purely religious Islamic institute. In addition, there are the private schools the oil company runs for its own officials and workers. These include a Technical Training Center where Kuwaitis learn the skilled trades needed in the operations of the oil company. [The Kuwait Oil Company], in fact, is a state within a state; it has its own hospitals and clinics.

Today, [a young Kuwaiti] learns arithmetic and belongs to the Boy Scouts. They have great excitement tracking in the desert; fox tails hang in the troop hall, and everybody his bare knees on [the Sabbath], which is Friday. . . . [A Kuwaiti boy] plays with toy [trucks] and jet [planes] as children do everywhere, but when it comes to drawing, he lets his imagination run riot in colorful pictures of foaming waterfalls, wide rivers, and great lakes fringed with virgin forest. That is his fairy-tale world, the world which he has heard of but never seen, a wonderful world where you can find shade beneath green trees and be lavish with fresh water.

Kuwait has three superschools built with oil money and designed by English architects. Each has cost £1,000,000 [about $2.4 million]. There are no schools in Europe to compare with them, and probably not in the USA is there anything so magnificent and lavish. I went over one when it was inspected by Sheik Abdullah al-Jabir, who has charge of all the schools in Kuwait. . . .

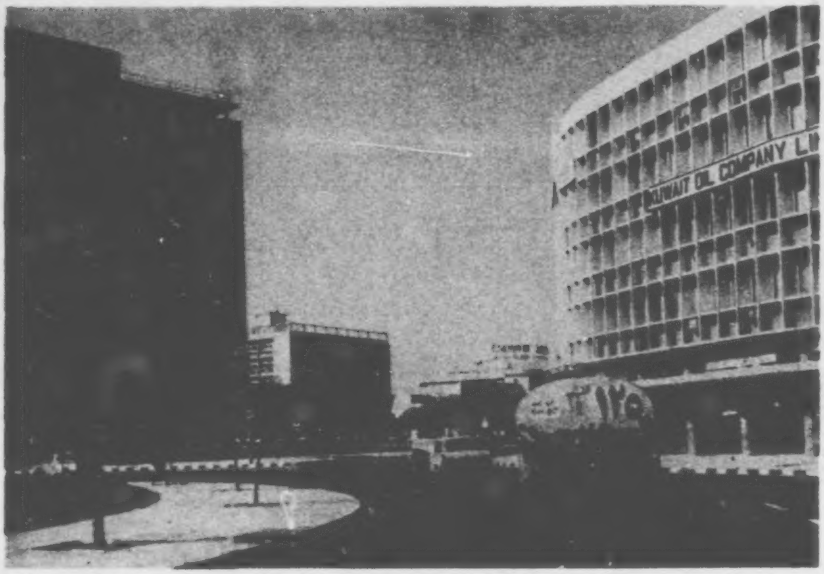
The Sheik pointed out the wonders of the place to me with justifiable pride, yet I believe that what he liked best of all was the model of a *baghala* [a sailing vessel] in the handicraft room. He studied it closely, and it was obvious that he knew the name of every sheet and block.

Kuwait's educational system calls for the serving of 14,000 free meals every day in the various schools in the town. These are supplied from a central kitchen, which must be one of the largest in the world. The food is distributed in thermos container cars, and even on holidays the schools' dining rooms are opened so that the children can come and have their lunch there, as on ordinary days.

Today the poorest Bedouin can send his boy straight from his tent, unwashed and with lice in his hair, to one of these palaces, and there, without its costing him a penny, his son will be washed, clothed, and stuffed with knowledge. . . .

In Kuwait itself, there is only the oil industry to absorb the production of the good schools. There are [few] possibilities for industry, as all other raw materials have to be imported and commerce has no local products to trade in.

So, what will happen if the goose stops laying its golden eggs, if the wells run dry? Someday they must, and whether that will be in ten years or a hundred no one can tell. Or suppose the scientists discover that it no longer pays to take all the trouble with oil, because it is much easier to get power, light, and heating from the sea, the sun's rays, the air, or some still undiscovered source of energy. It is not impossible. What would happen to the hospitals and the schools and the free meals and the running of the water distillery, if the . . . wells



Modern Kuwait is dominated by its oil industry, but forward-looking Kuwaitis are already planning for the day when their oil supply begins to run out. They hope to make Kuwait the major banking center in the Middle East.

. . . run dry? I asked Sheik Abdullah that question, and he had his answer.

By the time the oil ceases to flow, or its place is taken by something else, said the Sheik, the people of Kuwait will have worked up to a cultural level which will raise them high above the other peoples of the Middle East. They will be the Phoenicians of the Persian Gulf, who will trade in foreign lands with the products of other peoples. Kuwait will [let] others do the heavy work and only deal . . . in finished products. . . .

You can hear very much the same thing from the Sheiks of the other oil lands of the Middle East, Bahrein, Saudi Arabia, Iraq. . . . All those countries, into which millions pour from oil royalties without their having to do anything but use them in the best possible way, are dreaming of training their young people to be capable of deeds which will put their country at the head of the Arab world.

Table 2 shows where the oil in the United States comes from. From which part of the world will the United States import most of its oil in the future?

Now let us look at where the oil reserves in the world are located (Figure 1). Where will most of the world's oil have to come from in the future? From which countries will the United States have to buy most of its oil in the future?

Figure 2 shows the per capita income of some oil-producing and oil-consuming countries.

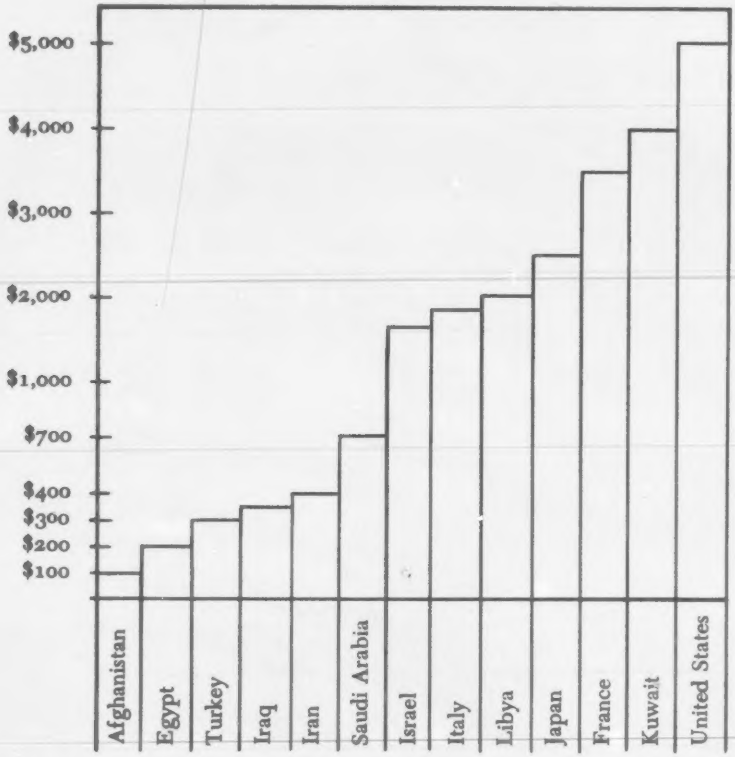


Figure 2. *Per Capita Income in Selected Countries in 1971, Prior to Oil Price Rises.*

What does Figure 2 suggest about why the Middle Eastern countries wanted to raise the price of oil? Do you think the price rise was justified? What will happen to the per capita income of the various countries in Figure 2 now that the price of oil has risen?

Table 3 compares the cost of oil from Texas with that from Saudi Arabia.

TABLE 3

Cost per Barrel of Oil Arriving at the East Coast of the United States

	From Texas	*From Saudi Arabia*
1971	$4.75	$ 3.40
1972	4.75	3.80
1973	5.05	4.00
1974	7.60	10.50
1975	–	11.00–12.00 (est.)

What is the percentage increase in the cost of Saudi Arabian oil over the years 1971–75? Texas oil is cheaper, so why don't we buy only Texas oil? With the price of oil going up, and with most of the oil reserves in the Middle East, what will happen to the oil-exporting countries?

Table 4 shows the projected increase in income of the Middle Eastern oil-producing countries. What percentage increase in profits is there each year in the Middle East?

TABLE 4

Projected Middle Eastern Income from Oil Sales

1973	$ 4.5	billion
1975	19	billion or more
1980	80	billion or more

Total income (est.): $250-$300 billion or more.
Net after expenses (est.): $200 billion or more.

Table 5 shows the accumulated foreign-currency reserves for the three leading countries in 1973. How does their wealth compare to the wealth Middle Eastern countries enjoyed in 1973? How does it compare to the wealth projected for Middle Eastern countries by 1980?

TABLE 5

FOREIGN CURRENCY RESERVES, 1973

West Germany	$34.1 billion
Japan	$15.2 billion
United States	$14.4 billion

Table 6 shows population statistics for selected countries in the world. Which Middle Eastern oil-producing countries have small populations? What effect does a small population have on per capita income in these countries?

TABLE 6

POPULATION OF SELECTED COUNTRIES, 1971

*United States	203,235,300
Japan	106,251,000
Italy	54,350,000
France	51,915,000
Turkey	37,500,000
Egypt	34,840,000
*Iran	30,159,000
Afghanistan	17,880,000
*Iraq	10,074,200
*Saudi Arabia	7,740,000
Israel	3,142,600
*Libya	2,080,000
*Kuwait	910,000

* Major oil producers.

If the Middle Eastern countries, especially those with small populations, will make all this money from their oil by 1980, what will they do with it? Can they spend it all? Will they spend it by importing luxury items or by building industry and modernizing their countries? Or will they invest it all and draw interest?

It is possible that the Middle Easterners will choose to invest their money in companies abroad. Do you think they might be interested in buying into American companies? If so, which companies might they be most interested in?

These questions are, of course, extremely difficult to answer, but they are the questions American and European economists are asking themselves about the wealth that will almost inevitably flow to the Middle East in return for Middle Eastern oil. This wealth may bring a power and glory to the Middle East that it has not seen since the days of Harun Al Rashid. Already there are indications that the Middle East will become increasingly powerful in the world economic and political picture as a result of its great oil wealth.

At the present time, the economies of all industrialized nations are completely dependent on a steady supply of oil. Europe, which has relatively little oil of its own, is especially vulnerable. Libya, with a population of only two million people, because of the quality of its oil and its nearness to Europe, is in a position to hurt Europe seriously by cutting down on oil production. If Libya were to stop producing oil for one year, it would take one-half of all Europe's reserves to make good that loss. And Libya, with over $2 billion in the bank and with a small population, can afford to be without income for at least four years. At present, it is highly unlikely that Libya will shut down its oil production completely, but the potential is clearly there, and Europe's dependence on Libyan oil can only increase in the future.

The key to the world oil picture, however, is Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia has at least 150 billion barrels of oil still in the ground, which constitutes half of all Arab reserves and 30 percent of all non-Communist reserves. If the world economy is to expand at its present rate, and if we in the West are to continue to enjoy our present standard of living, Saudi Arabia must continue to expand its oil production. If it refuses to expand its production, there is no way in which the need could be met by non-Arab countries.

As the Saudis have stated that they will burn their wells rather than allow a foreign military takeover, it appears that in the future Saudi Arabia will be able to make certain monetary and political demands in exchange for a steady flow of its oil. In a minor way this has already happened, for after the Arab-Israeli war in October, 1973, the Arabs, led by Saudi Arabia, declared that they would cut back oil production 25 percent until Israel withdrew from the lands it had occupied in the 1967 and 1973 wars. The resulting cutback (which in

Oil and Power Politics

Editor's Introduction: Roughly 75 per cent of the energy used in the world comes from oil or gas. Until very recently, Americans were using this energy as if supplies were unlimited. With each passing year, more and more automobiles were being produced and sold, and demand was increasing for air conditioners and other appliances and gadgets that required energy.

But suddenly, in the summer of 1973, the coming energy crisis became evident. By 1974 lines of cars waiting for gasoline were a common sight throughout the United States. Thus it became clear to the general public that energy supplies were not unlimited, and that energy conservation might be necessary for all people on the planet, including Americans.

The reasons for the sudden energy crisis are complex, but there are some basic facts that emerge when one examines energy statistics. On the basis of the following charts and graphs, what predictions can you make about the future world energy supplies and consumption? What will happen to consuming nations? To supplying nations?

TABLE 1 SHOWS the world need for oil. What trend do you see? Is it taking place slowly or quickly? What will happen if the trend continues?

By Robert P. Pearson. The following statistics and projections, and the discussion of energy issues, are based on data published in *Foreign Affairs*, *Time*, and the *New York Times*.

TABLE 1

THE NEED FOR OIL IN THE NON-COMMUNIST WORLD
(millions of barrels per day)

	United States	*Western Europe*	*Japan*	*Other Areas*	*Total*
1966	11.6	7.3	3.5	4.6	27.0
1973	17.0	14.5	5.0	8.2	44.7
1980 (est.)	24.0–27.0	22.0–24.0	10.0–12.0	15.0–18.0	74.0–78.0

TABLE 2

THE ORIGIN OF OIL IN THE UNITED STATES
(millions of barrels per day)

	United States	*Latin America*	*Middle East*	*Total*
1973	11.0	3.5	2.5	17.0
1980 (est.)	12.0–15.0	4.0	8.0–11.0	24.0–27.0

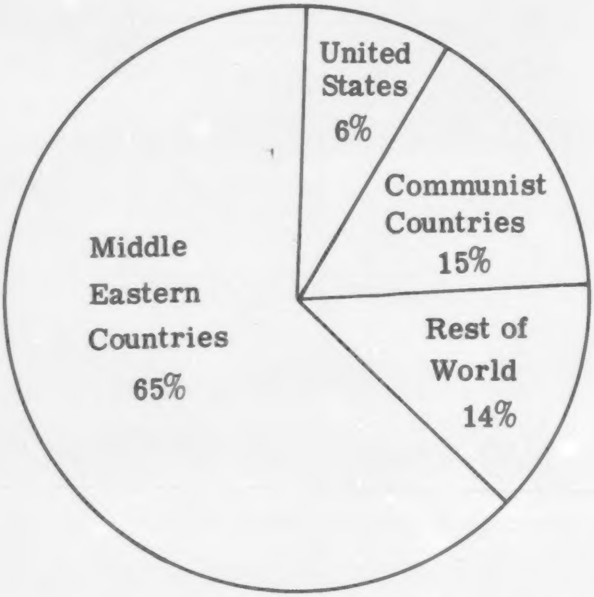


Figure 1. *World Oil Reserves.*

The Arab boycott of oil shipments to the United States had marked effects on America.

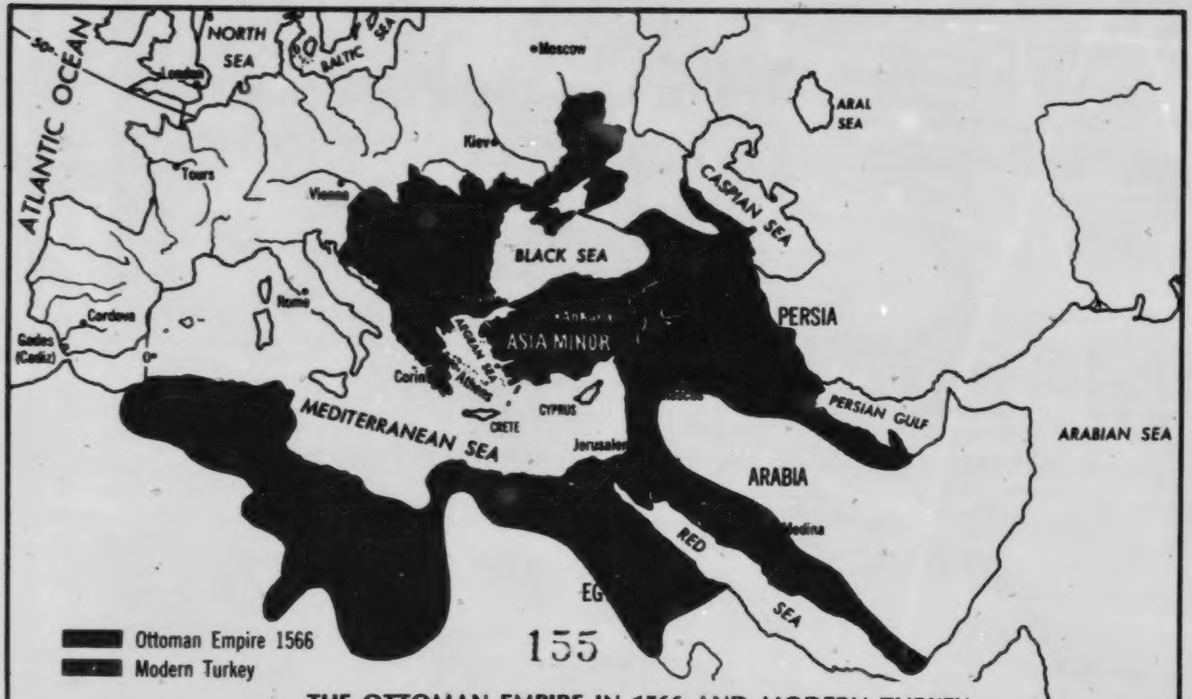
actuality was closer to 15 percent than 25 percent) caused oil and gas shortages and hurt the economies of Europe and the United States. It was conditionally lifted after the Egyptian-Israeli cease-fire. As a result of the cutback in production, Japan, which is dependent on the Arab states for 80 percent of its oil imports, changed its public stand on the Arab-Israeli dispute from one of neutrality to one sympathetic to the Arabs. The effect of the cutback on American foreign policy is as yet unclear, but it is certain that the United States has stepped up its efforts to bring peace to the Middle East, no doubt in an attempt to prevent future cutbacks. Clearly, the potential for the use of oil in world power politics is great.

The Middle Eastern countries, further, have the power to do more than merely increase or cut back on oil production. In the past five years they have gained the right to determine the price of oil, which had previously been solely in the hands of the Western countries. The Middle Easterners feel that they have been exploited by the Western countries in the past and that they have a right to make up for this now. They therefore intend to raise the price, but presumably not so high as to wreck the economies of the oil-importing countries, because all nations would lose if that were to happen. Until recently, it has been impossible for the Middle Eastern countries to manipulate oil prices, for there has been more oil available than there were buyers. In the past few years, however, the demand for oil has caught up with the supply. With their virtual monopoly on the known reserves of oil, the Middle Eastern countries will be able to raise or lower the price of oil at will in the future, because the industrialized countries cannot get along without their oil. The Middle Easterners need the money, however, for they know that their oil will not last forever; they have only fifty or seventy-five years in which to shift the base of their economies to something other than oil.

What will the Middle Easterners do with the vast sums of money they will make in the near future? It is theoretically possible for these countries to spend all their money on imports and internal development, but in actuality this could be done only if oil production were cut back, for otherwise there would be just too much money to spend. Assuming that oil production and accordingly oil revenues expand, the money will almost certainly be used in the following ways.

First, large amounts will be spent for economic development throughout the Middle East. Kuwait, as we have noted, has already set up a development bank to lend money to poorer Middle Eastern countries for development projects. Large sums of money may also be given to the World Bank for development projects or may go directly to countries in need.

Second, large sums of money will be invested in banks around the world. There is great concern among some economists that the sudden shift of large sums of money from the Western to the Middle Eastern countries would place the world economic system under great strain and would cause currencies to fluctuate greatly in value. This would be especially true if the Middle Eastern countries began to speculate


ATLANTIC OCEAN
NORTH SEA
BALTIC
SEA
London
Tours
Vienna
Moscow
Kiev
ARAL SEA
CASPIAN SEA
BLACK SEA
Rome
Cordova
Gades (Cadiz)
Ankara
ASIA MINOR
AEGEAN SEA
Athens
Corinth
CRETE
CYPRUS
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
Jerusalem
PERSIA
PERSIAN GULF
ARABIA
Medina
RED SEA
EG
ARABIAN SEA
Ottoman Empire 1566
Modern Turkey

THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE IN 1566 AND MODERN TURKEY

From Paul Welty, *Man's Cultural Heritage* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1965, 1966, 1969), p. 213.

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with foreign currencies. For instance, if the Arab countries suddenly sold the billions of American dollars they have in foreign banks and bought German marks or Japanese yen, the result might be a tremendous drop in the value of the dollar. This possibility would seem highly unlikely, for the Middle Eastern countries have nothing to gain and everything to lose by wrecking the system upon which their wealth is built. However, there is concern that unintended strains will nevertheless occur with such a gigantic redistribution of wealth.

Third, the Middle Eastern countries will almost certainly invest some of their earnings in the countries that buy their oil. At first, these investments will probably be in various aspects of the oil industry itself, such as oil refineries. However, it may be that Middle Eastern businessmen will eventually wish to invest in foreign businesses that are not related to the oil industry. In 1974, for example, Iran bought 25 percent of the giant German steel company Krupp Hüttenwerke. As Middle Easterners gain controlling interest in foreign companies, the nature of these companies may change. Even the names of the companies may be altered to Middle Eastern names. Perhaps you will one day shop at Faisal's Supermarket or buy Mohammed's Hamburgers. This is not to say that the U.S. economy will come under the control of Middle Easterners, but perhaps their investments in the West will one day be similar to the current U.S. investments in Europe.

All this is, of course, conjecture, for no one knows exactly where and how the large sums of oil revenues will be spent. But in a world that is changing as rapidly as ours strange things can happen. It is something to reflect upon that from 1974 to 1986, a scant twelve years, the people of this earth will use as much energy as all the people of the world have used from the beginning of man to 1973.

The Arab-Israeli Conflict

•§*Editor's Introduction:* During the Arab-Israeli war of 1973, the Arabs were able to use their oil as a political weapon. By cutting back oil supplies to the West, they made certain that Western powers would listen to their demand that Israel be forced to abandon the Arab land it had occupied during the Arab-Israeli wars of 1967 and 1973.

What were these wars about? What is the source of the conflict between the Arabs and Israelis? These questions are very difficult to answer; almost every "fact" is disputed by one side or the other. The basic dispute relates to who owns the land of Israel (formerly Palestine). Since the Jews were expelled from Palestine by the Romans two thousand years ago, they have been a homeless people and have prayed for eventual return to their land. But during the millennia of the Jews' Diaspora (scattering), the land was inhabited by Palestinian Arabs, although it never has been an official Arab state.

From the early sixteenth century until 1947, Palestine was under Turkish or British rule. As a result of the persecution of Jews in Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Zionist movement, whose objective was to bring about a return of the Jewish people to Palestine, began to grow. This movement was resisted by the Arabs, who felt that the land belonged to them. During World War I, the Arabs, with British aid, drove the Turks off the Arab land they possessed only to find that France and Britain had secretly agreed to divide this land once the Turks had been driven out. This private arrangement was made official through the League of Nations mandate system, by

By Robert Pearson.

which Britain gained control of Palestine. In 1917, Britain issued the Balfour Declaration, a document ratified by the League of Nations, which stated that the Jews had a right to a "homeland" in Palestine as long as the rights of the existing population were not affected.

At the time of this declaration, the population of Palestine was 90 per cent Arab and 10 per cent Jewish. But with the increased persecution of Jews in Europe and the rise of Hitler, Jewish immigration to Palestine vastly increased. The Arabs demanded that Jewish immigration be limited, and the British put a quota on the number of immigrants. World War II, however, created a large number of Jewish refugees who had no place to go, and Britain's continued refusal to increase the number of immigrants elicited great criticism in the West. By the end of the war in 1945, it was clear that something had to be done, and in 1947 the United Nations voted to partition Palestine into Arab and Jewish sections. This plan was accepted by the Zionists but rejected by the surrounding Arab states, which, as they had warned they would do, promptly attacked the new state.

This first war, in 1948, was won by Israel and resulted in an increase in the size of the Jewish state. Continued hostility between the two sides led to follow-up wars in 1956, 1967, and 1973. Israel won decisively in 1956 and 1967, and the two sides fought to a stalemate in 1973.

The chief issue at stake today is the future of the 1.5 million Palestinian refugees who have been made homeless by the various wars. The Arab states have agreed to recognize the existence of the state of Israel if Israel returns the land it conquered in 1967 and either allows the Palestinian refugees to return to their lands in Israel or compensates them for their losses. It is possible that a Palestinian state will be set up on the West Bank of the Jordan.

The selection that follows presents a hypothetical debate on the major points in the Arab-Israeli conflict between an Israeli (David) and an Arab (Daud, which means David in Arabic). What is the Israeli claim to the land of Palestine? What is the Arab claim? Why do you think the conflict has gone on so long? How does the history of the Arab and Jewish peoples explain their refusal to give up their respective causes?❧

DAUD: Well, looking back on the Arab-Israeli conflict, it all seems inevitable, doesn't it? Like it had to happen.

David: Yes, I guess it does. We were two oppressed peoples with nationalistic feelings coming into conflict over the same land.

Daud: But there are still some things I'm not clear about. For instance, the beginnings of Zionism. Where did this idea come from? Why did the movement spring up after so many years?

David: Well, for many reasons, but mostly because the Jews in Eastern Europe were victims of pogroms—the systematic beating and murder of Jews in their ghettos.

Daud: But pogroms had happened before, and no one had left Europe.

David: They had happened, but not so frequently and violently. It became clear that without our own country we would never be allowed to live our own lives.

Daud: But why *my* country? My people, the Palestinians, were living there!

David: The Jews came to Palestine because it is the promised land for the Jewish people; it is our ancient homeland, for which we have prayed for almost two thousand years. In our prayers, for all this time, we have said, "Next year in Jerusalem."

Daud: Wait a minute. The Jews may have lived in Palestine in the past, but they left. We Palestinian Arabs have lived in Palestine since that time. How can people who have been gone for almost two thousand years return and expect the people who live there now to move aside and make way for them?

David: No one was asking you to move aside. You could have stayed. All we wanted was a place to settle. There was room for both of us. We accepted the terms Britain gave us in the Balfour Declaration of 1917. This didn't declare a Jewish state but a home for the Jewish people, and we accepted that. After the slaughter of six million Jews by the Nazis and the incredible Jewish refugee problem caused by World War II, it became apparent that more than a Jewish home was needed, that a Jewish *state* was needed.

Daud: And that's just the point! We Palestinian Arabs were living there and wanted our own state.

David: I don't know what you mean by a Palestinian Arab.

Palestine was part of Turkey for hundreds of years until after World War I, when the League of Nations put it under Britain's control under the mandate system. It was never a state in any formal sense.

DAUD: You know what I mean. I am an Arab. I lived in Palestine until I was thrown out by European Jews who had never seen Palestine or the Middle East in their lives, people who spoke German or Russian or Polish. My father, grandfather, and great-grandfather all lived in Palestine. In fact, at the time of your Balfour Declaration in 1917, 90 percent of Palestine's population was Arab and only 10 percent was Jewish.

DAVID: Look, there have always been Jews in Palestine. Many Jews never left. They have, in a sense, held the land for us in our scattering—our Diaspora—until our return.

DAUD: How can land worked by my relatives and ancestors for centuries belong to a people scattered all over the world?

DAVID: You talk as if the land of Palestine were completely occupied when we arrived. Much of it wasn't. We have drained swamps and made the desert green. We have taken land that was never cultivated or occupied before and put it to good use. The land that was occupied or owned we bought and at outrageous prices.

DAUD: You bought some of it; you bought the land that was not taken in the 1948 war and the land that was not appropriated by your government when my people fled during that war. But when all this land became Jewish land, the Arabs were evicted to make room for Jewish labor.

DAVID: Well, that's what we came for—to work our own land. We were a desperate people with no land of our own who legally acquired whatever lands we settled on. Anyway, there were Jewish landlords who hired Arab labor.

DAUD: And you wouldn't have been able to hire anybody unless you were bankrolled by Westerners. This is another reason we have never been able to accept you. You can't deny that you are here because of the power of the Western countries; indeed, you are a part of the West, a potential tool of the Western colonial powers. You think like Westerners and have come here on Western money and were voted into existence by a United Nations dominated by Western countries, especially the United States. Israel is a Western arrow in the heart of the Arab nation. In fact, we Arabs have been the innocent victims of Christian anti-Semitism in Europe and America. The Christians in the West have worked out their guilt feelings for the way the Jews were treated by giving you *our* land.

David: You may have a point about Christians' guilt feelings about the Jews—in fact, many of them probably wanted to get rid of us, and they didn't care where we went. But it was the Jews who wanted to go to Palestine, their holy land.

Daud: You as a people wanted to go to Palestine after World War II only because the United States wouldn't admit as many of you as wanted to settle there!

David: That's only partially true. There are many Jews who are not Zionists, who personally do not want to live in Palestine, although they support the state of Israel. They might live in America but agree with Herzl, the founder of Zionism, that the solution to the mistreatment of Jews in Europe and around the world had to be the establishment of a Jewish nation—a return to their holy land. In fact, the whole world, as represented by the United Nations, believed in this goal and voted to establish the state of Israel.

Daud: The whole world my eye! The whole *Western* world you mean—the Western world that dominated the United Nations at that time. The Arabs never agreed to have a Jewish state. We told you we would attack if such a state were formed, and we did, as soon as Israel was declared a state by the United Nations in 1947. The war has continued off and on ever since.

David: Yes, you attacked, and you lost. You lost more land than you would have lost if you had just accepted the U.N. partition. First you refused to accept the U.N. declaration, and then you refused to accept the verdict of war.

Daud: How could we accept what was unjust and wrong? In 1917, the year of the Balfour Declaration, Palestine was clearly an Arab country. But the Zionist movement in Europe created constant immigration. You ask us to be law-abiding and accept the original decision of the United Nations. Well, you Jews weren't so law-abiding. During the years 1939 to 1943, against British law, you smuggled 20,000 immigrants into Palestine, so that the percentage of Jews in the population rose—to 33 percent by 1947.

David: That's just the point. Where were those refugees to go? There *had* to be a place for Jews to go, a Jewish homeland. And there would have been room for all of us if you'd just accepted the U.N. partition plan.

Daud: Accepted it! What if someone wanted half your house and when you protested said, "Oh, don't worry, there'll be room for both of us!" You forget that we Arabs were also a persecuted people. Since 1516, we have been ruled by outsiders, first by the Turks and then by the British and French. But the people who betrayed us the most were the British. In 1914, the British came to us and encouraged us to fight against the Turks by promising us our independence. So for four years we fought the Turks, and with British help we won. But all this time, the British and French had been plotting. With their secret Sykes-Picot Treaty they divided up the Arab lands. So after World War I we had a new ruler—the British. And with our independence at stake again in 1947, you expected us just to agree quietly when the United Nations, without our permission, divided our land in half!

David: But you never had been independent! There never was a Palestinian Arab state and the United Nations was giving you one.

Daud: You mean half a one. You can't deny that the Arabs living in Palestine were a settled people and, therefore, a nation.

David: But if you had just stayed in Palestine instead of fleeing, you could have kept all you had and benefited from the Western technology that the European Jews brought. Your standard of living would have risen. Why, look how much better off the Arabs in Israel are today than they were before the state of Israel existed.

Daud: How could we have stayed in Palestine? In 1947, after the United Nations declared Israel a state, the surrounding Arab states attacked to prevent our land from being par-

A historic moment: David Ben-Gurion, standing beneath a picture of Theodore Herzl, founder of the Zionist movement, proclaims Israel's independence after the 1948 war with the Arabs.

titioned. With a war going on we fled for our lives! In fact, you wanted us to leave to make room for Jewish immigrants! As for your economic arguments, what is money compared with freedom and independence and the right to run one's own country?

David: You could have stayed! In fact, many Palestinians did stay and are now full Israeli citizens who vote and send members to Parliament, and live in a democracy such as doesn't exist in the Arab world. The Palestinian refugees today are mostly those who foolishly followed leaders who told them to flee, who told them that they would soon be able to return to the land under Arab rule. Once these Palestinians chose to flee, they forfeited their right to their land in the new state. The responsibility for their loss lies with them and their leaders.

DAUD: That's not true. Did you ever hear of Deir Yaseen—the village where 250 men, women, and children were murdered by your terrorist groups, the Irgun Zvai Leumi and the Stern Gang? That's why people fled—for fear of atrocities—and it was just what you wanted.

DAVID: Oh, you're always trotting out Deir Yaseen. Yes, it did happen, and it was a tragedy perpetuated by one of our splinter groups. But it was the only time it happened. Thousands of your people stayed and were perfectly safe, and live as Israeli citizens today.

DAUD: And hundreds of thousands—600,000 or more, in fact—fled and are today living in refugee camps on 10 cents a day per person provided by the United Nations. As a matter of fact, they now number over 1.5 million because of births in the years of their exile.

DAVID: So whose fault is this? If you took care of your refugees as we have taken care of ours, there would be no

Palestinian refugees in Jordan line up for food. Refugees from the 1948 and 1967 wars live in refugee camps in Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon, supported by the United Nations.

problem. The Palestinian refugees could have been settled long ago in any one of twelve or more Arab countries. We have taken Jewish refugees from all countries of the world, including your Arab countries, and made a home for them in Israel. But the Arab countries have kept the Palestinians in those horrid camps as political pawns rather than take them in as brothers.

DAUD: What makes you think the Palestinians want to live in Egypt or Kuwait or Morocco? Their home is in Palestine, not in other Arab countries. Would an American want to settle in England or Scotland just because they speak English there? The Palestinians want to live in their own homeland, not someone else's. As for the refugees, your state was set up to take in refugees. The Arab countries were not created for this purpose. They respect the right of the Palestinian people to have their own country. Besides, the United Nations has stated by a majority vote countless times that the Palestinian refugees should be repatriated to Palestine or compensated for their losses.

DAVID: So now you listen to the United Nations. In 1947, you refused to accept its decision. In any case we cannot take in over a million Palestinians. They would be a fifth column—a people constantly plotting against us—and we would become a minority in our own state.

DAUD: Well, you are guilty of the same double standard with regard to the United Nations. You accepted the partition of 1947, but you haven't listened since. We accept the United Nations now because it has become truly representative of the world and is not dominated by the West as it once was. You have always identified with the West and not the Middle East, to the point that in 1956 you conspired with Britain and France to attack Egypt. As soon as Nasser kicked the British out, there you were, jointly attacking the liberator of the Egyptian people.

DAVID: Do you expect us to stick our heads in the sand? Egypt attacked us in 1948, at our birth, and by 1956 Egyptian-inspired guerrilla attacks on our land were making it impossible for the people on our borders to live in peace. We had to react.

DAUD: Yes, so you reacted by taking over more of our land with Western help, Western arms, and the information of Western spies. We have always known that you were an expansionist state. We have heard your Zionist leaders talking of an Israel stretching from the Nile to the Euphrates.

DAVID: Where do you get this? No responsible Israeli politician has ever talked like that. We are not an expansionist state. All we want is to live in peace. But we are forced to deal with the dangers on all sides of us. When you are being attacked by guerrillas and terrorists, you must weed them out. This means war, and if some Arab states lose some land, well, that is their own fault for harboring the terrorists. If you don't want war and don't want to lose land, then why don't you make peace?

DAUD: There you are again, talking about peace now that you have what you want—somebody else's land.

DAVID: Why can't you be realistic and accept things the way they are? You tried to turn the clock back in '67 when Nasser forced the U.N. units to leave the Egyptian-Israel border and closed the Gulf of Aqaba to Israeli shipping, and where did it get you? A disastrous war that you lost in six days! The clock can't be turned back. Israel exists. Why don't you accept it?

DAUD: President Nasser had every right to do what he did. Israel had never allowed U.N. troops on its soil, and Egypt legally had the right, as the United Nations agreed, to ask that U.N. troops leave its soil. As for the Gulf of Aqaba, you had taken it illegally, in an act of war in 1956, and had no right to be there. So, in 1967, you, along with your Western allies and spies, again took advantage of our unpreparedness and attacked. Once again you expanded, taking the Sinai a second time, the Syrian Golan Heights, and East Jerusalem, including some of our most holy Moslem places of worship.

DAVID: And why did we take these things? Because we were provoked by murderous Arab guerrillas and Arab armies hemming us in on all sides. What did you want us to do, wait until we were swallowed alive? Your leaders have always threatened to push us into the sea. For years, the Syrians had been firing rockets on our settlements from the Golan Heights. Our children in that area spent half their lives in bomb shelters. From the Heights, the Syrians could see everything and fire on everything. And as for East Jerusalem, that is the *most* holy of places for Jews, the location of the Wailing Wall, built of the stones of Solomon's temple.

For you Moslems, Mecca is your most holy city, whereas Jerusalem is at best third. For us, Jerusalem has been in our hearts for the almost two thousand years of our exile. Furthermore, while East Jerusalem was in Moslem hands, no Jews were allowed to visit the Wailing Wall. Now that all of Jerusalem is in Jewish hands, the holy shrines of all religions are open to all.

DAUD: No matter how you phrase it, it still adds up to one thing—expansion. The more room you have, the more Jews can emigrate to Israel. We know your goal is to get 3 million Russian Jews to come to Israel. Where are you going to put them? In Arab houses and on Arab land conquered in your various wars! And on the land you occupied in the '67 war, what have you done but build more and more settlements?

DAVID: There is plenty of room in Israel; we have the whole Negev desert yet to inhabit. We Israelis have made the desert bloom again, and there is therefore no problem of space. Yes, we have built some kibbutzim on the occupied lands, but this only serves as an incentive for you Arabs to come to peace terms with us. Then you will get most of your lands back, but not all, for we must always have secure borders. We cannot have the Syrians rocketing our settlements or the Egyptians playing military games on our borders. We also cannot let Palestinian terrorists brought up in those refugee camps slip into Israel and murder innocent civilians.

DAUD: Since when have you Israelis been so concerned with the lives of civilians? For one ambush killing of three people or for the ten Israelis killed in Munich at the Olympics, you murder hundreds in raids on refugee camps in Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon. You think nothing of bombing villages with your American Phantom jets and your napalm.

DAVID: Well, if you don't like it—and we only rarely and accidentally kill civilians and bomb only villages known to harbor terrorists—why don't the Arab governments control these inhuman monsters? After the '67 war, the Palestinian terrorists were able to do anything they wanted in Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon. If you won't control them, we will. If they kill our citizens, we must respond.

DAUD: How can the governments control the terrorists? They are too numerous, first of all, and their ultimate aim, the development of a secular state of Palestine, open to all Middle Eastern peoples and religions, is a just one. We don't like their methods--but their goal all Arabs agree on.

DAVID: Nonsense. The Jordanians for years claimed they couldn't control the Palestinians, and they are two-thirds of Jordan. But when they began to threaten the King—well, you saw what happened—they were wiped out as a military threat. Now the border with Jordan is silent. You speak of their just cause. What cause can justify the killing of innocent Israeli mothers and children, of nonpolitical Israeli athletes in Munich at the Olympics? What cause justifies these acts? The answer is no cause. These are the acts of madmen, of inhuman madmen!

DAUD: You Israelis have a short memory. Not long ago it was you who were the prize terrorists and killers. When the Stern Gang murdered or the Irgun Zvai Leumi murdered—your terrorist groups that preyed on the British and the Palestinian Arabs—you called them patriots. Again, I do not condone the radical elements among the Palestinians, but these are a desperate, displaced people, as you Israelis once were, who have spent their lives in refugee camps. And they look across into a rich Israel and know that they or their parents once lived there.

DAVID: If it's rich, which it isn't, it's because we made it that way by hard work. It wasn't always the way it is now. Nothing justifies the killing of innocent children.

DAUD: So you ask us to give up and accept being displaced forever. That is something you claim you never did in in your two-thousand-year exile. Perhaps you have unwittingly created a new Diaspora. In any case, that's what it looks like after the fourth Arab-Israeli war, in 1973. Egypt and Jordan seem clearly ready for peace, and Syria cannot fight on by itself. It looks as if the best we Palestinians can hope for is a country of our own on the West Bank of the Jordan, in what is now occupied Jordan.

David: Maybe that's what will come. I don't know what our government will agree to. Something has got to give. Some of our young men have been in three wars now, in '56, in '67, and in '73. Some have been in all four, including the '48 war. And the war in 1973 was the worst; you attacked on our holiest of days, Yom Kippur, and we were not ready.

Daud: Who asked for the attack? With all your Western arms and Western intelligence, you just sat there on our occupied lands, waiting for them to become yours as time passed. Not only was your government building settlements on Arab land, not only were you pumping Egyptian oil out of the Sinai, but you passed a law making it legal for private parties to buy land in the occupied territories. That was the last straw. You saw what happened—we Arabs did much better in this war. Because you had a backer, the United States, you forced us to get a backer, Russia. Because you were technologically competent, you forced us to become so. But in the long run, we have the greater potential for war. You will never be allowed to live in peace on occupied Arab lands. So you better sue for peace while Egypt is in the mood. Egypt seems willing to accept your existence as a state now, even though it knows what you have done to us Palestinians. If it makes peace, it may betray us, and that is why the Palestinian guerrillas are doing everything in their power to prevent peace. But perhaps the Egyptians are right and all we can expect is our own state on the West Bank. Perhaps we should take what we can get and live with the injustice done to us. Perhaps in the long run we can become neighbors. I don't know.

David: There *has* been no real injustice done to you, but I agree you should take what you can get. If you had been more realistic in the past, more compromising, perhaps all this never would have happened. But perhaps we have not been so compromising, either. Perhaps we were both desperate peoples who just could not see the world from the other's point of view. In any case, one thing is sure: we all need peace.

Anti-Semitism and the Holocaust

Editor's Introduction: Throughout their long exile, the Jewish people have always faced some degree of persecution, ranging from prohibitions against owning land to laws governing all aspects of their behavior, but anti-Semitism grew especially violent at the end of the nineteenth century in Russia and Eastern Europe, at a time when nationalist movements were strong in Europe. The Jews became a convenient scapegoat, for as a minority they were easily preyed upon. False rumors would spread about what Jews did to Christian children or how they controlled the economy, and mobs would descend on the Jewish communities killing, destroying, and looting. In Russia this kind of mob violence was called a pogrom.

As a result of the pogroms, the Jewish people despaired that they would ever be accepted in the various countries in which they lived. This feeling was expressed in a book by Theodor Herzl in which he outlined a plan for the establishment of a Jewish state. With Herzl as its head, the Zionist movement in Europe took form, and small numbers of Jews began to immigrate to Palestine.

The rise of Hitler in the 1930's brought the persecution of Jews in Europe to an insane and intolerable culmination. Hitler proclaimed a "final solution" to the Jewish problem: All Jews were to be systematically killed. As the Nazis conquered more and more territory in World War II, Jews were rounded up and sent to concentration camps, where millions of them were shot or gassed to death. In all, 6 million Jews were killed, and hundreds of thousands became refugees. As a result, the pressure to create a Jewish state became overwhelming. The state of Israel was voted into existence by the United Nations in 1947.

The traumas of these years have left their mark on the Jewish people. The holocaust lives as a horrifying memory for many Israelis. With their own state, they feel they can determine their own future and will never again have to rely on others to protect them or have to endure persecution as a minority.

In the selections that follow, we see the workings of anti-Semitism in Europe. The first selection describes a pogrom in the Russian town of Kishineff. Do you think there is anti-Semitism in America? What causes people to create scapegoats? ❧

A Pogrom in Russia *

. . . ALL THE EVIDENCE that I have gathered during eight days of searching inquiry in Kishineff convinces me that the riots were not a casual or accidental uprising of a mob against the Jews, but formed a carefully planned attack by the local anti-Semitic leaders, with the passive connivance of the Chief of Police and the active encouragement of some of his officers. [The] deplorable weakness in not employing his military force to quell the riots during the first day is responsible for the horrors of that and the massacres and the violations of women and girls on the second day. . . .

I have two detailed statements, carefully prepared by eyewitnesses of the scenes. One is a copy of the indictment of the authors of the massacres; . . . the other is a specially prepared statement by two Christian ladies, . . . Here are a few instances of the worst crimes:

The Feldstein family is one of the most respectable in Kishineff. The mob attacked their saloon on the corner of Armenia Street at noon on the first day, Sunday, April 9. The police barracks are some forty paces away. The soldiers and police patrolled the street during the five hours occupied by the mob in demolishing the saloon and destroying fifteen thousand rubles' worth of wines. A safe containing a large sum of money was also broken open and robbed. While that section of the mob was thus employed, the leader of the gang found in the kitchen of the family residence the meat for the family's dinner. He put it on a stick, mounted to the roof of the saloon, which is of one story, and, addressing the mob, the police, and the military in the street, declared, "Here are the remains of a Christian child found in the house of the wealthy Jew, Feldstein."

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* Michael Davitt, *Within the Pale*, The Jewish Publication Society of America (New York: A. S. Barnes & Co., 1903), pp. 126–34.

The members of the household were saved by a Russian employé of Feldstein and a humane gendarme, from the fury of the mob. . . .

At No. 13 Asia Street in the Bender Rogatka quarter some of the worst outrages were perpetrated. Twelve families, all Jewish artisans, lived in the yard. A mob of Moldavians, some Russian workingmen, and a few Albanians attacked the occupants of the yard. The majority of the Jewish men escaped, while the women and girls, numbering sixteen, concealed themselves in a loft under the roof of a one-story house. Four Jewish men tried to defend the place, and were murdered. Their wives and daughters, with a dozen women and children, had taken refuge in a loft under the roof of No. 13. . . .

One Mottel Greenspoon, a glazier, was stunned by a blow from a bludgeon, and the Albanians mutilated him while still alive. They then choked a child, two years old, and cut out its tongue, while alive.

The other three men were killed and then had feathers put on their faces. As an act of desecration of the dead, two drunken women, one Moldavian and one Bulgarian, trampled on the body of Greenspoon as it lay mutilated in the yard. The mob then found its way to the loft where the women were concealed, and remained several hours. All the women and girls were violated.

All this time the police and soldiers were patrolling the open space in front of the house where these fiendish crimes were committed. I saw blood spattered on the walls of the rooms and yard, and picked up a child's schoolbook on which some murderer had wiped his hands.

At the household Foudyn, No. 33 Gostinna Street, four men and one woman were killed. Sixteen families lived in this yard, all those of artisans. The mob came the first day and demolished the windows and doors. It returned the next day for massacre. Sixteen women and eight children were concealed in the loft. The first killed was a boy of sixteen, who begged piteously for life, saying he had done no wrong, was a scholar of the state school, and wanted to live. His father, at the other end of the yard, heard the boy's cries, but could not save his life. They killed him while the father lay stunned, unable to make an effort to save the boy's life. . . . One married woman escaped through the roof, leaped to the ground, ran to the nearest police station, and implored help, but she was driven out by the officer, who said the Jews were only receiving what they deserved. Another married woman named Feya Katzap was bludgeoned to death in the yard of this house. . . .

During the worst stages of the riot the chief police officer, Tchemzenkov, drove through the city smoking cigarettes. At one period of the disturbance, on the morning of the second day, the Jews of the New Bazaar organized a body of about 150 to defend themselves, but Police Officer Dobroselsky, on finding them able to drive the mob away, arrested several of the defenders and broke up the body.

Among the prominent looters of the Jews' shops was the soldier servant of a military surgeon; and a son of a murdered woman, Keyla Konza, declares that among those who violated and killed his mother were four common soldiers.

Joseph Newman testifies that his father was killed in the presence of policeman Stepanovitch.

A Christian Russian says that he heard the students from Odessa shout to the mob, "Kill the Jews!"

A prominent employee in the municipal office in the city was declared to be an active director of the mob, showing where the Jews lived, and shouting, "Kill the Jews!"

Several police officers did their duty and saved many lives in the Jewish districts. Among these was Officer Sloutschevsky, of Bender Rogatka, who, with twelve men, drove the mob away. They went from this to the Asia Street district, where another police officer was patrolling, and he allowed them to commit the murders described. Some artillery officers, who were off duty, manfully saved several Jewish women.

On the morning of the first day's outbreak large crosses were chalked on the houses of the Christians living in streets inhabited by the Jews, and none of these dwellings or shops was injured. Ikons (Christian images) were shown in the windows of other houses, and thus indicated places not to be attacked. During the progress of the first day's outrages the Bishop of Kishineff, while on his way to dinner with a rich noble, passed in his carriage through the mob, giving his blessing to the crowd. Upon hearing of this incident, I refused to believe it possible, and resolved to interview the nobleman, who is Michael Nicolavitch Kroupensky. He received me courteously, and said:

"Bishops in Russia always give blessings to people when passing through the streets. This was purely an accidental coincidence. The Bishop is a humane man."

The Holocaust Kingdom [*]

◆§*Editor's Introduction:* In the following selection, we see how the Nazis rounded up Jews in the countries they captured during World War II without telling them that they were headed for concentration camps and death. It is taken from a story describing what happened in Poland in the Warsaw Ghetto.§◆

Vague rumors, dark hints, were the preliminary stage. Several members of the *Judenrat* [Jewish Council] had been arrested and were being held hostage; it was whispered that they had been executed. On Wednesday, July 22, 1942, . . . early in the afternoon, black and white posters appeared all over the Ghetto:

> (1) By order of the German authorities all Jewish persons living in Warsaw, regardless of age or sex, are to be resettled in the East.
>
> (2) The following are exempt from resettlement:
>
> (a) All Jewish persons employed by the German authorities or German government agencies, who can produce adequate proof of their employment;
>
> (b) All Jewish persons who are members and employees

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> of the Jewish Council on the day this order is published;
> (c) All Jewish persons employed by German firms who can produce adequate proof of their employment;
> (d) All Jews capable of work who so far have not been included in the work process; these are to be barracked in the Jewish living quarter;
> (e) All Jewish persons belonging to the staff of Jewish hospitals or disinfection squads;
> (f) All Jewish persons belonging to the Jewish police;
> (g) All Jewish persons who belong to the immediate family of persons covered in a. through f. Only wives and children are considered members of the immediate family;
> (h) All Jewish persons who on the first day of resettlement are bedridden in one of the Jewish hospitals and not qualified for discharge. Such inability to leave the hospital must be attested to by a doctor appointed by the *Judenrat*.
>
> (3) Each Jewish resettler may take 15 kilograms of personal belongings as baggage. All baggage exceeding 15 kilograms will be confiscated. All valuables such as gold, jewelry, money, etc., may be taken along. Enough food for three days should be brought.
>
> (4) Resettlement begins on July 22, 1942, at 11 A.M. . . .

Once the posters were up, the strangely deserted streets were suddenly filled. Thousands gathered around them, studying them in silence, scrutinizing every word and letter. . . .

The first trainloads were to leave that day, July 22, and there were no difficulties in filling the quota. Prisoners from the Gesia Street prison and people from the refugee reception centers were loaded into horse-drawn carts. . . .

The roundup procedure began with cordoning off an apartment house. Ghetto police blocked all exits, and then fifteen or twenty of them, with an officer in charge, ordered all occupants into the courtyard. Here papers were checked; those who failed to pass muster were immediately loaded into a wagon. While this was going on, other policemen went through every apartment to make certain no one was hiding. At first, persons hiding had been able to escape when discovered by paying a small bribe, but the police were growing more brutal and callous.

Eventually whole streets were sealed off at one time and everyone on the street had to have his papers checked. . . .

In 1943, the Nazi invaders of Poland rounded up the Jewish population of Warsaw and sent them to concentration camps, where they awaited "the final solution."

From the beginning of the war . . . resettlements and relocations of one sort or another had been everyday occurrences, so that no one thought that this one would be any different. . . . Everyone reassured himself [that] it *was* a resettlement. . . . Through their agents the Nazis did everything to maintain this illusion. . . .

I saw a young mother run downstairs into the street to get milk for her baby. Her husband . . . had as usual left earlier that morning. She had not bothered to dress but was in bathrobe and slippers. An empty milk bottle in hand, she was headed for a shop where she knew they sold milk under the counter. She walked into [the roundup]. The executioners demanded her *Ausweis* [work permit]. "Upstairs . . . I'll bring it right away."

"We've heard that one before. Have you got an *Ausweis* with you or haven't you?"

She was dragged protesting to the wagon, scarcely able to realize what was happening. "But my baby is all alone. Milk . . ." she protested. "My *Ausweis* is upstairs." Then, for the first time, she really looked at the men who were holding her and she saw where she was being dragged: to the gaping entrance at the back of a high boarded wagon with victims already jammed into it. With all her young mother's strength she wrenched herself free, and then two, and four policemen fell on her, hitting her, smashing her to the ground, picking her up again, and tossing her into the wagon like a sack. I can still hear her screaming in a half-crazed voice somewhere between a sob of utter human despair and the howl of an animal.

Night of the Mist *

Editor's Introduction: It was at the German concentration camps, such as Auschwitz and Dachau, that the "final solution" was put into effect, and Jews were shot or gassed and buried in mass graves. In the following account, a survivor of Auschwitz whose family died there describes what it was like.

THE DAYS WHICH FOLLOWED merged into an indistinct mass. I had completely lost my sense of time. . . .

In Auschwitz the sun rose crimson behind the electrified wire fence. [But] it mattered so little whether the sun was rising or setting—nights and days alike meant only weariness and exhaustion. . . .

Five of us ate off one plate. If one of the five took one bite more than his due, we flew at one another and then literally licked up the food that spilled on the floor. There were even some who killed in their hunger. I had known these people at home. Once they had been respectable, cultured citizens, members of charitable societies and select clubs. . . .

In the barracks which rose dark and forbidding on the other side of the road, a colony of gypsies had settled. Their "Aryan" origin entitled them to special privileges: men and women could live together and even have children in the camp. In the years since they had been dragged here, little harm had been done to them. They lazed about in the elegant clothes of which we had been robbed by the SS [secret police]; they did not have to work; in fact, they enjoyed quite a good time. . . .

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* Reprinted from *Night of the Mist* by Eugene Heimler by permission of Vanguard Press, Inc. and The Bodley Head. Copyright © by Eugene Heimler.

I lay there next to the electrified fence, on the opposite side of the road to the gypsies, growing more and more lethargic. It was a strange kind of numbness. My eyelids felt heavy as lead, my limbs as though they were paralyzed. With closed eyes, I lay inert in the sunshine. The noises of the camp sounded fainter and fainter. [That] afternoon . . . a sudden commotion started up during the customary roll-call (the so-called *"Appell"*). The road was emptied of traffic, sirens hooted, gongs were struck.

An SS patrol on motorcycles had arrived before our barrack. Their leader, a tall, blond officer, yelled from afar: *"Hauptschwein, antreten!"* ("Line up, swine!") With trembling limbs and knees knocking, the barrack commander moved toward him. "Enough–stop there. Don't come any nearer, you filthy beast!" the SS man shouted at him, and went on to order him to report the number of "carcasses"–that is, sick people–in the barrack. The SS man then started off toward the queues to ascertain personally the number of those unfit to work.

A harsh shout brought me back to my senses. The *"Appell"* was over. People were slowly dispersing. I knew that something was about to happen, that I had to do something. Half-conscious, I stumbled toward the electrified fence.

A long ditch ran between the electric fence and the back entrance of the barracks. If someone could no longer bear his dreadful existence and deliberately touched the live wire or chanced to rush against it in a fit of nerves, his body, struck dead in an instant, fell into the ditch and lay there until the *Sonderkommando* * came to take it to the crematorium [where the dead were burned]. It was in this ditch that I took refuge after the *"Appell"* was over. Feigning death, I lay there motionless. Yet I did not understand myself why I did so: some unknown power seemed to have benumbed my senses, holding my thoughts and movements in suspension.

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* Jewish males who were allowed to live in return for doing the worst jobs: cleaning the gas chambers, extracting gold from the teeth of the dead, bulldozing bodies, etc.

I had been lying there for a long time, watched only by the glassy stare of several corpses, when suddenly I became aware of a loud rumbling. . . . I recognized it immediately—SS [trucks] were rolling into the camp. Almost at once they pulled up sharply before Barrack No. 17. The night was dark; only the headlights of the [trucks] lit the scene. I held my breath and listened. Curt words of command were clearly audible. . . .

With riflebutts, whips, and bare fists they goaded my comrades from the barrack into the [trucks]. Now and again a shot echoed through the night. . . .

It was only now that I became aware of the screams and cries that filled the night. One after the other the [trucks] started off, loaded with human cargo for their fiery destination. The whispered stories that I had heard from the older prisoners about the gas chambers now hit me with dreadful reality. It seemed to be true after all—a thing which even here had seemed unbelievable.

Slowly I lifted up my head as the last of the [trucks] was passing through the camp gates with its wailing load. Barrack No. 17 gaped wide open in terrible emptiness. I had to get away from it, forget I ever belonged to it, get into some other barrack.

"Away, away from here. . . . Quickly, quickly. . . ."

On all fours I began to crawl along the ditch. I knocked into dead bodies—I climbed over them. My hands were smeared with their blood. Each movement had to be made with care lest I touch the electrified fence. The searchlights on the watchtowers scanned the night, sweeping round the camp. As the beam came toward me I froze on the ground, arms spread out, eyes wide open, until the light had passed me. On, on. . . . The fire of the crematorium flared up, higher and higher. As though propelled by some superhuman force, I crawled from barrack to barrack.

Near one of the barracks I clambered out of the ditch. Before the entrance there stood a few barrels. . . . Suddenly, with a single leap, I landed near one of them, and hid there. I did not have to wait long before it was opened from the inside. I pretended that I had just come out of that barrack; then I went in. Here, too, the overcrowding was as suffocating as it had been in No. 17. I had to find room for myself somewhere. I stumbled over human bodies—they struck out at me—I kicked back. . . . I had to find room—just a little room to sit down. . . .

I realized then that the only way to find some room and save my life was to pit force against force. . . . I kicked, smashed, and bit until I had obtained a bare foothold for myself in the darkness. At last I was able to sit down. But, though I was overwhelmed by exhaustion, I was unable to sleep. . . .

When the light of dawn began to trickle into the barrack, I glanced around to get my bearings. My neighbor seemed familiar. For a long time I stared dully at his pale face, puzzling at the way his eyebrows met in the middle. Gradually I placed him. It was Uncle Bert, our family doctor all through my childhood years—and now in this twilit dawn, amid death and terror and far from the old life, still the same old "Uncle Bert" to me. This creature lying on the ground in his striped prison clothes had once shone his tiny [light] into my throat on a winter evening. . . .

Now he lay there, Uncle Bert, thin as a skeleton, in the midst of the whining, shouting, fighting multitude of the barrack. Gone were his home, his house with the roof garden, . . . he lay helpless next to me. Slowly, he opened his eyes. He did not recognize me as, in a whimpering voice, he begged for some warm tea. Outside the barrack in the dawn light they were already beginning to dish out the drugged brew called tea. I went out and brought back a mugful of the steaming liquid. . . .

The routine of camp life continued. For hours on end we stood during the morning roll call and evening roll call. Fewer and fewer of the old crowd were left, and the chimneys of the crematoria threw up their flames by night as if it were part of a firework display. Only in the gypsies' quarter did everything remain the same.

I spent every evening with Cara. By now I felt she was the only creature to whom I could talk and who could understand me. Was it love that developed between us during those slowly moving days? I do not know. If it was love, it was an Auschwitz brand of love. It was a mixture of numbness, suffering, hopelessness, death, and the writhing agony of pleasure. I was little different from Cara now. Poetry, music, and painting did not enter my thoughts any more. I, like the others, was only preoccupied with scheming how to grab a bigger chunk of bread, with rejoicing that it was not we who were being burned that night. My brutality, my violence, the extinction of my moral sense no longer worried me. As if knocked on the head, my conscience lay unconscious somewhere in the deep recesses of my soul, no longer able to remind me of the eternal laws of humanity. The sight of people lying in their congealed blood in the ditch beneath the electrified fence had ceased to quicken my pulse. My fists were no longer itching to get at the murderers. I was a man of Auschwitz. Only rarely, and that while dreaming, could I weep—and when I woke up I did not know why I had been crying.

I roamed aimlessly among the gypsy barracks. I saw their days and their nights, their embraces and the grunting expression of their delights. I recognized that their standard of living was a great deal better than our own, but I no longer asked myself why they deserved a more privileged lot. Nothing could make me wonder any more.

Not until a new horror took place one night. Everything happened as if in a nightmare. Afterward, I could only remember being blinded by the head[lights] that shone into my eyes out of the darkness of the night, and hearing a sudden commotion and screaming from the gypsy quarter, as the SS [trucks] carried the gypsies out of the camp. And then I no longer felt Cara's body beside me.

I do not know how long it took them to liquidate the gypsies. But when at dawn I noticed the scattered pots, the torn garments before the empty barracks, at last I realized that I would never see Cara again. The fate of Auschwitz had overtaken the gypsies, too. I burst into tears. For hours I wept hysterically, as if all the tragedy I had previously experienced, all the terror of days, weeks, and months, had overwhelmed me in that one night. And in Cara's destruction I sensed my own.

The Life of Joseph Baratz

PART I

Editor's Introduction: The story of the building of Israel by the *halutzim*, the early pioneers, is a thrilling one. The first wave of settlers, known as the first *aliya*, an "ascent" or return to the holy land, was a result of increasing repression and violence toward Jews in Russia and Eastern Europe in the 1880's and 1890's. Further repression of Jews after the abortive Russian revolution of 1905 led to a second wave of immigration. The thousands of Jews who went to Palestine during this period were dedicated to the creation of a new life. Some of them could not tolerate the difficult conditions; thus, the early Jewish settlers who stayed were, in effect, the fittest, for they not only had chosen a most difficult way of life but had survived.

The third *aliya* to Palestine followed the Balfour Declaration of 1917. Further waves came in 1924, as a result of the repression of Jews in Poland, and in the 1930's and 1940's, in response to the rise of Nazism in Germany.

One of the pioneers was Joseph Baratz, who grew up in Kishineff (Kishenev), the scene of the Russian pogrom described in an earlier selection. The following excerpts from his autobiography demonstrate the complex motivation and incredible dedication of these pioneers. In Part I, Baratz describes his life in Russia and his decision to go to Palestine. Joseph was about your age when he decided to go. Can you imagine yourself doing something like that? Under what circumstances?

Joseph Baratz, *A Village by the Jordan* (London: Harvill Press, 1954), pp. 1–10.

I WAS BORN in a Ukrainian village on the shores of the Dniester. . . . We lived in the Jewish quarter and we were a traditional community, very different from our Russian neighbors in looks, manners, and customs. The men wore long gabardines [coats] and curling side-whiskers; the married women shaved their heads and put on thick black wigs. Our food was kosher [permitted according to Jewish law]. Our language was Yiddish [a German dialect, with some Hebrew and Slavic words, spoken by many European Jews]—Hebrew had long been reserved for prayers, and we had little occasion to use Russian. We had our feasts and our traditional songs, music, and dances. Our schools were the *heder*, where the usual elementary subjects were taught in Yiddish, and the *yeshiva*, a Hebrew seminary. . . .

Our conditions were indeed uncertain and hard. Except for a small, wealthy minority we were not allowed to leave the Pale [the Pale of Settlement, the only place Jews were allowed to live in Russia] . . . we were kept out of Russian schools and universities and we were surrounded by legal restrictions and were at the mercy of corrupt officials—so were Russians with full citizenship but to a lesser degree. No Jew, if he could help it, would go to law, because he knew that justice was weighted against him. Worse than any of this was the constant fear of some abominable accusation of ritual crime which was often followed by pogroms.

We . . . were largely cut off from the outer world; segregated by our own traditions and our fears almost as much as by Russian anti-Semitism, we lived timidly in the narrow circle of our small-town interests. . . . Some [Jews] joined Russian political parties . . . but the crushing of the Liberal Revolution of 1905 was followed by pogroms more savage than had yet been known, while a wave of reaction spread all over Russia. Other young people became members of the Zionist Youth Movement [a movement calling for the Jews to have their own homeland].

The World Zionist Organization was formed in 1897, and the Jewish National Fund started raising money for land settlements in 1901. There had been talk of buying Palestine from the Turkish Government, but it had come to nothing; then the

British had offered Uganda [an East African country] as an immediate refuge for the Jews of Eastern Europe, and Herzl, a Viennese and the prophet of the movement, had proposed at a Zionist Congress that this offer should be accepted. But we were more traditional than the Western Jews: For us, there could be no question of a "return" anywhere except to the Holy Land. . . .

None of these problems worried me until I was thirteen. We were not well off but we were a happy and united family without great cares. Then in 1903 the quarter of the town in which we lived was sacked [in a pogrom]. We escaped unhurt but afterward I saw the wounded and went to the funeral of those who were killed. Perhaps it was this that turned my thoughts seriously toward Zionism.

I had a friend of my own age. We always went about together so that people called us the "twins." Together we joined the Zionist Youth Movement. We both liked physical work better than reading or writing, so after school we would go to the Zionist library and tidy up the books and scrub the floor. . . .

We were helped by the coming to Kishenev of a great Zionist leader, Joseph Sprintzak. I don't know how old he was in those days, but he made a tremendous impression on us. . . .

With his help we became more active, but we had to meet secretly. There was a tailor who lent us a room in his house; he was a wonderful old man. There we held our secret meetings and we wrote our illegal proclamations: We said that the Jews ought to defend themselves when there were pogroms, and we told them to leave Russia and to go to Palestine. We could have got into a lot of trouble by doing this. After the leaflets were written they still had to be distributed; the tailor had several daughters and they all helped. . . .

When I was about fourteen I began to feel that all this talk about Zionism wasn't really Zionism. I began to want to go to Palestine, and I intended, when I got there, to be a peasant. This was a new idea among us, and I can't exactly explain how it first came to us. In the early days Palestine had been thought of mainly as a refuge, though much had been written about the new country and the new culture we were to build; now we felt that in order to construct our country we had first to reconstruct ourselves. We had been intellectuals, semi-intellectuals, middlemen for too long. We had to work with our hands and above all we needed a peasantry—that had to be the foundation of it all. . . .

For two years I thought about it and I made up my mind to go, but I was afraid to tell my parents. I had sisters and a half-brother (we were as fond of one another as though we had been full brothers); still, I was my mother's only son. How could I tell her, knowing what it would mean to her? All the same, in the end I told her.

Father went to ask the rabbi; the rabbi said, "No." How could a boy of sixteen undertake such a journey? Besides, in Palestine I might fall among freethinkers and myself drift into irreligious ways.

There was an open struggle between . . . my parents [and me]. They brought every possible pressure to bear on me. Not that my father ever beat me, but he argued and argued with me, and my mother cried. What made it easier in the end was that a friend of ours who was already settled in Palestine came home on a two-month visit and offered to take me with him when he went back and to keep an eye on me. Then my parents gave way, and it was my father who gave me the money for my journey—it was not a great amount, but it was a lot for him.

On my last night my friends gave a party for me. We sang and we danced, but we were sad because my father hadn't come. Then at midnight he came—an old Jew in his black kaftan and with side-whiskers—and he too began to sing and to dance. He sang in Hebrew and the only words of his song were the words of the Passover prayer: "Next year in Jerusalem"; this he sang over and over again, and he danced for about two hours.

Early in the morning, straight from the party, we went to the station. I and the friend with whom I was to travel at last got into the train. My father, my mother, my relations, my friends—all were on the platform. My mother cried, and as the train drew out she called after me: "Joseph, my child, be a good Jew." And I too was crying, and I wished I were staying with my father and my mother.

The Life of Joseph Baratz

PART II

☙§*Editor's Introduction:* Many of the early immigrants to Palestine from Europe were strongly influenced by the socialist movement. They hoped to develop in Palestine a just society in which all people would be equal economically, socially, and politically—a society without private ownership, in which there would be no employers and employees, but all would be workers, and the fruits of their labor would be shared equally. Many Jewish immigrants to Palestine were shocked to find that some of the previous immigrants employed Arab labor and seemed to be in the process of becoming a landed aristocracy with an Arab peasantry. From a socialist point of view, this not only was economically and socially backward but would not bring about the development of the "new Jew" that the Jewish socialists hoped to create. After centuries of landlessness, they felt that the only way the Jew could gain the virtues of being self-sufficient was by getting back to the land and working it with his own hands. Thus, a great many early immigrants worked day and night not only to create a new land but to create a new person through work.

A result of this philosophy was the amazingly rapid development of productive agricultural communities, some of them engaged in extremely difficult work such as draining swamps or irrigating desert land. Although many of the agricultural communities now are completely modernized and have developed small industries in addition to their agriculture, the work ethic still lives, and settlements are still being formed in the hostile Negev desert.

Joseph Baratz, *A Village by the Jordan* (London: Harvill Press, 1954), pp. 11–19, 26–27, 31–33, 40–45, 47–52.

With what attitude did Joseph Baratz and his friends approach their work in Palestine? Why did Joseph feel uncomfortable in the famous Rishon le Zion settlement? What was his philosophy of work?

We went by train to Odessa; there we embarked on a tiny ship. The journey to Jaffa took about nine days. The ship was packed with Christian pilgrims (this was in December, 1906, shortly before Christmas); there were also a few Jewish pilgrims, and a couple of *halutzim*, "pioneers," like myself. . . . The great waves and the rocking of the ship and the groaning and the stench inside the crowded hold were terrible.

At last we anchored outside Jaffa harbor. Arabs in long white shirts came in little rowboats to take us off. The sea was still rough; we looked at the tiny boats and we thought that we would never get there. Some people refused to leave the ship; the Arabs climbed on deck and picked them off and dropped them into the boats. Some of the boats capsized, but in the end we all landed.

Jaffa was a little Arab town; it was the only sizable seaport in those days. We had been told that it had several Jewish inns and that the one to go to was kept by Haim Baruch. It was all strange to us—the flat-topped, cream-washed houses like boxes, the minarets poking above the roofs, and the dusty palm trees, and the dark, loose-robed people in the streets, but it was good to be on dry land and coming to a Jewish inn was a little like coming home. . . .

We rested [for a while], then I said goodbye to my parents' friend, who was taking the stagecoach to Jerusalem. The rest of us also decided to move on. We were at last in Palestine—in the Land of Israel, as it was called in Hebrew—but Jaffa was a town, and of what possible interest was a town to us? Where should we go?

All our lives we had heard about the Bilu group—the "Biluim" who had founded Rishon le Zion. Rishon means "first," and Rishon le Zion was one of the very first settlements. The ritual wine we drank at Passover came from the vineyards of Rishon. . . . We wanted to see them, so we set off to Rishon.

It was a distance of about ten miles. As there were no buses and we had no money to take a cab, we went on foot. . . .

Naturally we were excited when we saw them—in a moment we would see a Jewish village . . . we imagined a village like in Russia—hens pecking in the road, children shouting by the river, and not a soul in sight while the sun is high and all the peasants are in the fields.

But what was this? We were in a pretty street of neat brick houses with red tiled roofs; from one of them came the tinkling of a piano. The street was full of people strolling up and down. We couldn't believe our eyes. We asked:

"Who are these?"

"Biluïm."

"And who does the work?"

"Arabs."

"And what do the Jews do?"

"They're managers, supervisors."

It was a great shock to us. I said to myself: "This isn't what I've come for," and I could see that the others were disappointed as well.

All the same, Rishon was a fine place. The people were kind to us. That evening they gave us a meal—fried eggs and bunches of grapes to follow—and allowed us to sleep in a vineyard. But the next morning we left and walked on to Rehovoth, another settlement.

There I found a friend from Kishenev who was a farm laborer. He put me up in his room, where there were already four or five others, and he got his employer to hire me. The next morning I went out to work. At last I was on the land. . . .

The first day I went to work I didn't know how I would get through it. Our tools were primitive—there were hardly any spades and, of course, no tractors—we used hoes mostly. My hands felt as if they were on fire. But we soon got used to it and grew muscles and horny palms.

It was a great happiness for me to be on the land, and the people among whom we lived were interesting. . . . Nearly all the settlers, old and new, were Russians, but they all spoke Hebrew, though Yiddish and Russian were also often heard. They read books in many languages.

A chief goal of many of the early Zionist immigrants to Palestine was to get back to the land. Here some *halutzim* (pioneers) work in tobacco fields near Jerusalem in 1927. They were part of the fourth *aliya* to Palestine.

I made friends with Zvi, a boy of about my age. We both joined the "Young Workers"—the right-wing Labor Party which had grown out of the Zionist Youth Movement we had belonged to in Kishenev. . . .

I was not to stay in Rehovoth long—almost before I had begun I was removed from the agricultural work I loved. One night, after I had been there for about three months, I had gone to bed early and was already asleep; suddenly Zvi came in and shook me awake. A message had come from our party headquarters that young *halutzim* were needed for work in Jerusalem and two of us had been chosen. We were not at all pleased but it didn't occur to us to refuse. We were sure that the people who ran our party would never have asked us to do this if it were not for the good of the country, and it was this, after all, that we were here for. So the next morning we set out. Once again we went on foot. . . .

There were Moslems and Christians and Jews living in Jerusalem; the Jews were Yemenites who looked almost like Arabs. . . .

Soon we discovered what we had been called for. The New City was beginning to be built on the outskirts of the Old. . . . Now our two parties had decided to call for *halutzim* to take part in all this building. Of course we had no experience of this kind—we told them so, but all they said to us was: "Go and learn." . . . We were told that we were not only to rebuild Jerusalem, but to renew the spirit of these young Jews; it made sense to us. The words of the Passover prayer in Palestine are not "Next year in Jerusalem" but "Next year in Jerusalem rebuilt": For the pilgrims the rebuilding was that of the heavenly rather than of the material city—the rebuilding of righteousness; for us it was both, so we did as we were told and stayed, though our hearts were still in farming.

Once again we had to learn an unfamiliar task. We had no money for our keep while we were doing it, so it was arranged that we should get a subsidy raised by a group in Odessa called The Friends of Zion. . . .

Those first weeks in Jerusalem were terrible. I had been given a hut among some olive trees; every night I would creep under the trees and cry—I was afraid that I would not hold out and I was lonely and my fingers ached; by day I pretended to be cheerful—I was a pioneer, I was ashamed—but at night I couldn't sleep, I missed my father and my mother, and I came out and sat under the trees and cried.

Our subsidy hardly paid for our food, and even when we began to earn a little we still went hungry. So after a time, three of my friends and I decided to get together and to live as a little community. After that things went much better for all of us—the money stretched farther and we cheered one another up. . . .

[At last we were able to leave Jerusalem and go to a settlement named Zi Khron.] Here we were in the middle of the conflict between the old settlers and the newcomers. It was going on in many settlements and it caused much hardship to the *halutzim* who could not get work. The real question was whether Jewish labor was to be employed at all, and we were not thinking only of ourselves; how were the many thousands who needed refuge to come in at all unless there were a market for their labor? To many of the farmers our ideas of becoming new and better through work made so much nonsense. But [what would be gained] so long as the Jews in Palestine were like proud colonials who needed lots of Arab wage-earners to work their places? . . .

[In those days] we were always dancing. You would hardly think it possible after the day's work we'd done. We would come into the dining room dead tired, and eat our meal quickly, and then sit with our elbows on the table, resting, not talking much at first. Outside it was dark, but the dining room was bright with kerosene lamps or the feast-day candles. Then a discussion would start and others would join in. And then somebody would begin to play the harmonica or the guitar, or to sing, and other people joined in the chorus and clapped [to] the beat. All at once our tiredness went from us and we got up and danced. In a moment there would be a ring of us, our hands linked, barefoot or in our heavy boots, stamping out the steps of the *hora*, two steps clockwise and one step back, slowly at first, then getting faster and faster, whirling round and round. Or we would go outside and dance on the roads and in the vineyards. All over the village and the plantations the young people would laugh and sing and dance. If it was a Friday we would sometimes dance all night.

That was how I [met] Miriam, the sister of the friend I had worked with in Athlit. She was seriously ill when she arrived and she stayed some days in bed. Then one evening, when we were dancing the *hora* in the dining room, there she was beside me; we looked at one another and laughed. Round and round we twirled to the singing and the clapping; when we were quite breathless the ring broke up and we sat down together.

Miriam looked [thin and pale]. Dr. Joffe came and scolded her for being up. She waved her hands at him: "Aie, what's the good of spoiling a fever! Much better sweat it out," and in a few moments she was dancing again.

Evening after evening we danced together. Miriam didn't stay long in Zi Khron, but afterward, whenever she could get a lift in a cart, she came on the Sabbath. . . . One evening several of us were walking in the vineyard. I remember I had a bunch of grapes in my hand; I held it out to [Miriam] and I asked: "Where are you now?" She laughed and she said: "In Hapzibah." It means "I love you," and it is the name of a little settlement. I stopped, and all at once I saw her and it seemed as if my heart melted. I said "Hapzibah," and she too said "Hapzibah" again, and we walked on. . . .

All that year the *halutzim* in [our area] were restless. We were happy enough working on the land, but we knew more and more certainly that the ways of the old settlements were not for us. This was not the way we hoped to settle the country —this old way with Jews on top and Arabs working for them; anyway, we thought that there shouldn't be employers and employed at all. There should be a *good life*. But how was it to be achieved? What was the best way for us to help each other?

The way of life we dreamed of did not yet exist, but more and more of us were attracted to work in Galilee. . .. .

But it was more than a year before I went to Galilee. . . .

That September, on the eve of the New Year, Miriam and I announced our engagement and gave a party. We had hardly anything to eat and none of us had any money, except a few Turkish [coins] Miriam had brought with her. She spent them all on bread, rice, lentils, and oil and we had a princely feast. Everybody was happy and we danced without a break till sunrise. . . .

In the meantime, there had been a new development. . . . Dr. Ruppin, who was at the head of the Palestine Office of the National Fund [contributions from Europe to aid the establishment of Zionist settlements in Palestine], was a man of great imagination and courage. . . . He decided that a tract of land should be handed over to [some] *halutzim* to develop on their own responsibility. Such an experiment could not be tried out on a big scale [so] 750 acres [were] offered to the *halutzim.*

The group who took it on were among the best workers in the country, but they didn't mean to settle [there]: They would try it out for a year, then if the experiment were a success they would hand [it] over to a permanent group. . . . Toward the end of the year . . . we were approached by Dr. Ruppin. We held a discussion about it. [The land] was being offered to us; it was ours for the taking. We were very happy. . . .

By this time we were ready; we were trained, we knew each other, and we had worked out our ideas as far as we could without trying them out on our own land.

At the bottom of them was a view of life we held in common. . . .

There [in the Diaspora] we had been cut off from nature, from our roots, and everything had been distorted by the need for security—even the family had become a little fortress. We had had to buy security with money and make money with whatever are the money-making faculties of the brain; we had lived on our brains and we hadn't used them properly because we had been cut off from the growing, natural side of life. That was why we had become so dry, so barren.

We [Jews] had had to use our brains to buy; now we would use our hands to give, and in our communities we would do away with money altogether. We would have among us neither masters nor paid servants, but we would give ourselves freely to the soil and to one another's needs. Thus nobody would have to be ambitious or to worry for himself or his family; the community would protect him, there would always be all the others to help him out. . . .

The Life of Joseph Baratz

PART III

§*Editor's Introduction:* As we have seen, many Jewish immigrants believed in the value of getting back to the land and setting up a society in which all people would be equal. These immigrants settled in agricultural communities and, having no model on which to build, began to develop them by trial and error. Today the most common types of agricultural settlements are the *kibbutz* and the *moshav*. The chief difference between the two is that there is more private property in the *moshav* than there is in the *kibbutz*, in which almost everything, including the land, is communally owned.

To join a kibbutz, a person must go through a trial period of a year before formally applying for membership. If he is accepted as a member, he joins a group of people who collectively decide the individual nature of their particular kibbutz. Decisions are made in group meetings. The work of the kibbutz is done by various committees, whose membership generally rotates. There is a work committee that decides which jobs people are to do on the kibbutz. All property on the kibbutz, including even clothes in some kibbutzim, is owned collectively. Except for a small amount of pocket money for personal items, everything a person needs is given to him by the kibbutz. In many kibbutzim, children do not stay with their parents but live in a Children's House, in which all their needs are taken care of. After their parents are finished with the day's work in the fields, their children visit them for a couple of hours before they return to the Children's House for dinner and the night. In some kibbutzim, the sexes are not segregated until the middle teens; all children use the same bathrooms and

Joseph Baratz, *A Village by the Jordan* (London: Harvill Press, 1954), pp. 65–70, 74–75, 122–24, 126–28, 150–53, 157–59.

shower rooms and sleep in the same rooms. To the degree possible, all people are treated in exactly the same way.

In the following selection, Joseph Baratz describes the growth of the first kibbutz in Israel, Degania, of which he was a founding member. It is interesting to note how the kibbutz evolved naturally, and how important decisions were made as they came up rather than by any prearranged plan. How were the women on the kibbutz treated at first? Who decided whether Baratz's son would go on to technical school or not? How does Baratz view the early days of the kibbutz, compared with the way the kibbutz is now?❧

OUR VILLAGE LIES in the valley close to where the Jordan flows out of the Sea of Galilee. The hills of Galilee are on one side of us and the mountains of Syria and [Jordan] are on the other and in the distance we can see the snow cap of Mount Hermon.

In winter the fields are green, then yellow with corn and barley, and in spring there are wild cyclamens everywhere and poppies and cornflowers and many other wild flowers. Degania, the name we gave our village, means "cornflower." . . .

Today, when you come down the new road from the hills, you can see the lake and the Jordan [River] and the valley with its groves, gardens, and fields, and many fishponds; the whole valley is beautiful and fresh with water. But when we came . . . this road did not yet exist; there were no trees, only burned grass and a few shrubs.

We arrived in summer. It was very hot down there, two hundred meters below sea level. The air buzzed with mosquitoes and it lay heavy and close between the hills. The flat valley was like a hot plate, the heat pressed on it. Everything was burned brown. The river was a trickle. But when the rains came, it flooded the land; and when the waters withdrew, they left swamps and mud. For months on end we were cut off by mud. It sucked the boots off your feet and no cart could get through it, and the swamps bred fevers.

There was water all around us, but to get it to the fields and the houses you had to bring it up in pails or barrels. We used mules—two big [cans] to each mule—then barrels on carts. Later on we had an Arab water wheel—the mules turned it—and still later we had a steam engine. Today it's all quite different. The water is pumped by electricity and runs through pipes, but this only came about after forty-three years. The malaria has been fought down. We planted eucalyptus trees to drain the swamps, and as more fields came under cultivation this itself helped to drain the land. . . .

In 1911 we were twelve, ten men and two women. The reason for this number was that six men were to do the ploughing, two to act as watchmen [against Bedouin robbers], one [to serve] as secretary-accountant, and one to be in reserve; the two women would do the housekeeping. . . .

In spite of its hardships, that first year was wonderful and full of joy for us. There seemed to be no limit to the work we could get through; what the body couldn't do the spirit made up for. But it was very hard indeed. Nearly everybody had malaria and there were cases of yellow fever. It was the climate that made us suffer most. It was so bad that at first we used to say: "We shall never be able to raise children in this valley, we must move to higher ground," and we thought of building our village on the top of a high hill and of going down to our fields in the valley every day.

In the beginning we had only grain crops. We tilled them with primitive tools. We had no farm animals except six pairs of mules and two horses. . . . Nowadays we plough with tractors, but for a long time we ploughed with mules.

The ploughs and the harvesters and the seed had all been given us by the Palestine Office. We had a contract with it: It provided the land and stocked it, and, in return, we paid it 50 per cent of our net profits; the rest we kept, and in addition we got fifty francs [$1.50] a month a head as wages."

All the men in the *kvutza* [small group or community; also used for age group] worked happily from the beginning, but at first the women were not happy. The reason . . . there were only two of them was that we still thought women could only cook and wash. We men went out before dawn, six of us with our mules and ploughs, and we stayed out until after dark; then we would come home and wash and have our meal, and then we would sit for hours talking about our work, telling each other about our animals, how the soil was getting black, and later how the green was showing. We were so enthusiastic, there was never any end to it. The women listened and were jealous; their work was quite different and the conditions for it were very hard. There were neither stoves nor kerosene—not to speak of electricity as there is now. They cooked in the open over a wood fire on two stones placed upright. . . .

One day they came to us. "Listen to us," they said. "We came to this country with the one idea in our heads—to work and to live with nature. But what now? You men are happy, you like your work, but we are worse off than our mothers were in their small towns. What do you yourselves think of it? Should we continue in this way, with this difference between your lot and ours?"

We couldn't understand them. Our fathers had been breadwinners and our mothers had cooked. "How else can it be?" we asked. "Should a woman plough? Or should the men cook? What would other people think of us? We should be ashamed before everybody."

But our women gave us no rest. They insisted that things must change, that we should buy cows and chickens and grow vegetables so that there would be work for women, and that more women should be sent for. It was a difficult problem; we couldn't understand it and it made us suffer. . . .

But in the end the women won. Gradually we understood and we changed. Now we know that women can do farm work, that they can even plough, and they can even fight. Not their words but their actions have proved it to us. . . .

When our first child, Gideon, was born—he was the first baby in the *kvutza*—everybody fussed about him and nobody knew what to do with him. Our women didn't know how to look after babies. There was nobody whose advice Miriam could ask; the other women were still younger than she was. She found her own methods.

After the child was born she was dangerously ill and both of them had to spend some time in hospital, but when she came back she began to work as before, and wherever she went she took the baby with her. She took him to the vegetable plots and to the kitchen and to the poultry run. If she were in the cowshed she put him down on the straw and the cow licked him. The whole of Degania cried over the baby: They cried because they thought he would die of dirt, or they cried because the baby cried. . . .

But the child grew up to be strong and healthy. Now he is a father himself, a big, sturdy, handsome man. He has married a South African girl and lives in Tel Aviv, working on the mobilization of labor [for] the Negev [desert].

Miriam . . . was nearly killing herself, working as hard as ever and looking after him as well and sometimes getting up in the middle of the night to wash his things, and going back to sleep again for a little. . . .

We saw it couldn't go on like this. . . . By the time there were four children in the colony we decided that something must be done.

It was a difficult problem. How were the women both to work and to look after their children? . . . Somebody proposed that the colony should hire a nurse. But Joseph Bussell said, ". . . All the women, whether single or married, should take part in looking after them; then the mothers could do other work as well. And the cost of the education of the children must be borne by the community as a whole."

So we didn't hire a nurse, but we chose one girl to look after the lot of them, and we put aside a house where they could spend the day while the mothers were at work. And so this system developed and [has since been] adopted in all the *kvutzoth* [communities], with the difference that in most of them the children sleep in the Children's House, but with us they stay at night in their parents' quarters. . . .

Gideon was a real pioneer among babies. As he grew bigger there was no kindergarten and no school in the *kvutza* to send him to, so we sent him to Ain Harod, a big *kvutza* in the Emek which had its own school; but when he finished that school there was again a problem. He was a gifted boy with an interest in mechanics. Should he go to the Technical School in Haifa? At first Miriam and I were in favor of it. But a meeting was held and it was decided not to send him. Everybody came to the meeting and everybody discussed the question; the arguments on both sides were carefully weighed. Shouldn't the boy be given every opportunity of learning, and wasn't the Technical College the best training school? But then education wasn't only learning. Gideon was a country child; in Haifa he would be subjected to the influences of the town. He intended to stay on the land, and we could employ him on our own machines—we were getting them just then. As for training him, we had people among us who had been trained as mechanics; they could teach him.

Miriam and I felt no disappointment over this decision; on the contrary, coming out of the meeting we were very happy. It had been a good meeting. Everybody had felt deeply concerned over Gideon; everybody wanted the best for him. . . . There was no conflict between personal interests and communal interests—they were the same. I am not saying that it is always and invariably like this, but for the most part Miriam and I have found it so.

Today we have seven children and eight grandchildren, and Degania is swarming with youngsters of all ages. Fifty-five of the second generation are full members of the *kvutza*, and a hundred are below eighteen, which is the membership age. Our fears that the children would suffer from the life or the climate were proved wrong. The children are fine. The swamps had been dried; the climate has changed. It is hot, but the children like it. They run barefoot in summer when the earth is like fire, and it doesn't worry them, because this is where they have been born and bred. . . .

In 1930 we put up a big new school for our children and the children of the valley. We were given a donation for it by Miss Henrietta Szold. She was a great American Zionist; she had founded the huge American women's Zionist organization Hadassa—it ran our most important medical service—and when Hitler came [to power in Germany] she started the "Youth Aliyah," an organization which rescued tens of thousands of children from Europe and brought them up in Palestine. . . .

Of course [the children today] are brought up very differently from the way we were brought up ourselves. To begin with, they are real country children; they look as if they had the country in their bones. They know the ways of the land almost without being told. They swim like fish in the lake and in the river and they are excellent with animals. . . . They have much more freedom than we had in our schools. . . .

The school has its vegetable plots and its orchard and its flower garden, and the children help to grow them, and they also help in the kitchen and with the housework, and wait at table, boys and girls alike. The school is meant to train them for the land, but they get a good secondary education—they learn the Bible and literature and all kinds of things. When they are about twelve or thirteen, they start helping with seasonal work, and in their holidays they work with their parents. They are magnificent workers—it seems to come naturally to them—but not if you give them something to do just to keep them busy: They have to feel it's really useful. In the middle school they spend two-thirds of their time at lessons and a third at work, and in their last year it's the other way round.

When they finish their course they can go on to the agricultural or the technical high school in our valley. There are two other high schools for kibbutz children in the Emek—all four have been set up by the Association of Kibbutzim. . . .

Nowadays if anybody has a special bent for something he may be sent away to the university or a training college or an art school (though we haven't so far any artists among our children). In the early years it was much more difficult—we couldn't afford it easily and there were many fewer scholarships. . . . But it is still only done if the kibbutz really thinks it worthwhile. . . .

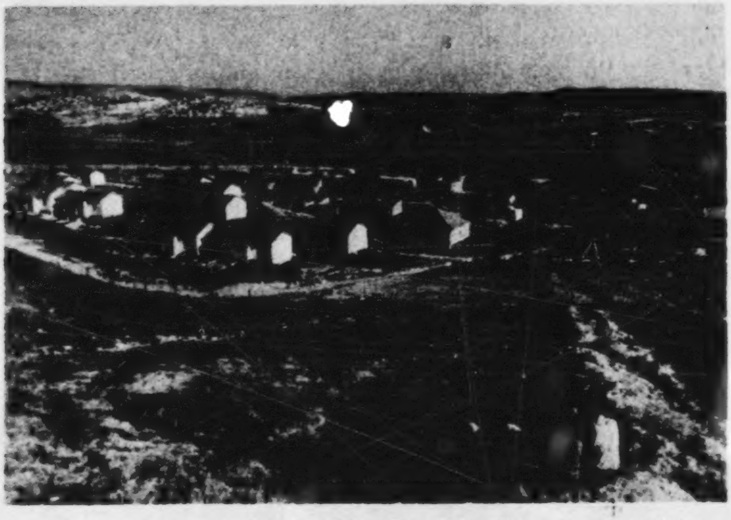
Of our seven children, four—Yona, Batya, Michal, and Eli—are members of Degania; they work in different branches of farming, and Batya and Eli have, like their mother, specialized in dairy work. Of the three others, Devorah and her husband are on the land, though not in a kibbutz; Amos with his family is in Herzlia, where he works for a film company; [and] Gideon is in Tel Aviv, with his South African wife, who prefers living in town. . . .

We are a great mixture in Degania nowadays. People have come from everywhere—Germans, Rumanians, Poles, Persians. Moroccans, Iraqis; some have come as adults, others as children to be trained and have stayed on—though the idea of these training groups is that they should go out and found new settlements.

As you know, in the beginning we were all Russians—so were nearly all the early *kvutzoth*, as the Second Immigration also came from Russia. Later kibbutzim have been founded by Germans, Rumanians, groups from other parts of Europe, and people from England, South Africa, Canada, and the United States. Recently *halutzim* have come even from such faraway places as Australia, New Zealand, and South America. It is natural that the members of the founding group should be mostly from the same country, and to some extent their nationality gives its character to the *kvutza*—although, when it comes to the children born in the settlements, you can hardly tell them one from another. . . .

Of our original founders' group, only six are left in Degania—Miriam and myself, Tankhum and his wife, Haya, and the two brothers, Haim and Yaakov Berkowitz. . . .

Many of the people who were with us at the beginning have died. Others have left us for personal reasons, or because they found our particular way of life too difficult, or because, after trying it out, they came to the conclusion that they pre-



A typical settlement in Israel. Although technically it is not a kibbutz, it is similar in many ways to the kind of kibbutzim Joseph Baratz writes about. The chief difference is the extent to which private ownership is allowed.

ferred to build a different kind of settlement. They have done no less for the pioneer movement or for the country than we have, but their role [has been] different.

Just after World War I, there was a lot of argument about the *kvutzoth;* it was going on all over the country. Some people thought that everybody could live in this way; others [thought] that it was only suitable for a few people; still others disapproved of it altogether, saying that it interfered with the freedom of the individual and discouraged him from taking initiative. And there were those who said, "The *kvutza* is a form of life which is wonderful in itself but my heart desires a more private existence." . . .

You would hardly recognize Degania for the place we came to almost half a century ago, and it is very different today from those early years, when we had nothing but grain crops or when we first started on our mixed farming. There were no agricultural research stations in those days and the experts knew little about the country, so we had to fumble our way along; we tried this and that and made mistakes, and we sweated blood over them, but the farm grew—the crops and the dairy and the vegetables and the poultry.

The whole balance of our farming is different from what we had expected. The dairy has become enormous, and so is the poultry farm—the chicken runs are like a snowstorm with these huge white Leghorns, and the incubators are like a factory. Tnuva, the marketing cooperative, which has its branches all over the country, markets the whole of our produce for us. . . .

Our main crops are wheat, barley, vegetables, bananas, grapes, grapefruit, olives, and alfalfa. The alfalfa shot up astonishingly after irrigation was introduced—eight crops a year! We feed our cattle on it and we sell the rest. The bananas and the grapefruit have done well ever since we started planting them—we sold about 76,000 kilograms of bananas last year—but it took a lot of trouble to discover the right sort of olives. We grow apples, too, and recently we have started date palms. There is very little we can't grow in our valley if we put our minds to it. . . . But it is a curious thing, I find it easier to talk about the past than the present, and sometimes I even look back to those days with a kind of envy. Of course everything has improved in a hundred ways. But there was something very good about that time. There was something very good about the way we lived and worked. Not that the young people nowadays work less hard than we did. You should just see them in the Negev—you should see what they're doing to their land, and it's a real desert if ever there was one—as naked as your palm. But now everything is more organized; there is a well-planned task and a great organized army of labor. When we came, we were the first and we were alone and the future was unmapped; there was something limitless about it. And then there was the spirit of that first tiny group; that comradeship I think is something that can never quite be equaled. . . .

Living conditions have changed too. We were very austere in the beginning—perhaps even too austere. Not that we could afford to be otherwise, but we also believed in it. A great advantage of the kibbutz life is that it is suitable for pioneering, but the pioneering spirit tends to be austere. Single people lived in dormitories, families had a room, but there was the bare minimum of space and furniture. The whole life of the kibbutz was in the dining room—this was our only meeting place; that was where we ate, and rested, and held discussions, and read and wrote, and sang and danced. There was no social life anywhere except in the dining room, with its bare board walls and its narrow tables and benches, and its kerosene lamps; even when we put up a permanent building in cement, for a long time it was still much the same. The food was poor and monotonous, and the clothes were whatever cost least to buy or make, the same for everyone, so that when they came from the laundry they were interchanged. There was no sanitation except outdoor closets, and the washing arrangements were two huts with showers, one for women and one for men. Actually, this was only changed last year.

But now you should see our rooms—there are chairs and cupboards and window curtains; each room is allowed a kettle and a spirit lamp and its own small portion of tea and biscuits, so that people even entertain in their rooms! The women don't make up, but when you see them in their pretty holiday best you would hardly know they are peasant women.

Of course, it isn't anything to complain of, and by other standards it would even perhaps seem funny that at sixty-four, after forty-five years' work, we should live in one room and have seven pounds a year pocket money if the kibbutz can afford it, and nothing put by for a rainy day, and that we should complain of too much luxury. Not that I do complain, but some people think it is too much. I don't think there is too much in Degania, though perhaps there is in some other settlements. . . .

[So the *kvutza* has done well by us. It] watches over its people—no one is alone, neglected, allowed to go under or be soured by his struggle for his living. And nobody feels he is alone, and that helps him to behave decently. Suppose that I quarrel with someone here, do him some injury, some harm. I know a hundred pairs of eyes see it—that makes me think twice. In town, if you behave badly to someone or he behaves badly to you, you needn't meet that person again; you can avoid him; you needn't settle things squarely with him, humanly. Of course, there is always the law to punish you if you go too far, but that's impersonal. Nobody can force me to be good. I ought to be good because I feel the need for it inside me and for the sake of the community—the *kvutza* constantly gives one that feeling.

Of course things are not always smooth. There are petty differences, jealousies like everywhere else, but in the atmosphere of the *kvutza* they don't get out of hand. And as time passes the *kvutza* influences people and gives them discipline from within. . . .

Miriam and I have never had a moment of disillusionment with the life of the *kvutza*. There have been hardships —plenty—but never a moment of doubt or disappointment. Not that I think it is necessary for everyone to live in this way; I don't think it is good for everyone; I believe that there are many for whom it isn't good and who shouldn't even try it; but we ourselves have always found it good.

Nor is it necessary for every Jew to live in Israel, nor for everyone to work on the land. But we have found it very good to work on our land. The land has been very good to us. We have had a difficult life, and there are still many problems and difficulties. The land is still waiting to receive the many thousands who need a refuge, or who may one day need a refuge, or whose hearts are in exile from it. It is waiting to feed and to comfort them and to give them the peace and the certainty that we have received. And until they have received it we cannot rest. There are still deserts in our country to be made fruitful, barren acres to dig and to water, and the brains of our scientists and our strength and the strength of our young men must be given to this hard task. And the people who come in from all the corners of the world, after all the barren and restless centuries, must learn what the land will ask of them and what the land [will] give them. And we ourselves must be watchful to keep alive our spirit and to be ready for whatever is asked of us.

We know that the land responds to work and to selflessness. It does not give itself in the same way to greedy hands or to rapacious hearts; but to us who, for all our sins and errors, have asked of it nothing but to feed and shelter the hungry and homeless multitudes, it has given itself gratefully. It has rewarded us. We who came to this barren soil of swamp and desert, to this climate that was moody and dangerous, see around us the green valley teeming with life, with children, with rich harvests, and beyond the hills, throughout the whole country, our children are carrying on our work. When we planted our trees we said, "Our grandchildren shall not be hungry." But we ourselves are indeed most happy; few people can have seen such fruit of their labors.

A Nation of Immigrants

Editor's Introduction: Joseph Baratz is one of many thousands of immigrants who have come to Israel in the hope of creating a new and better life for themselves. Israel is a nation of immigrants from more than seventy countries, speaking many languages. How do people speaking all these different languages communicate? In the early days of Zionism, Hebrew was a "dead" language, as Latin is, and was used only in religious ceremonies. But as a result of the determination of many early immigrants, who vowed to speak only Hebrew in the holy land, the language was revived, and it is now the official language of Israel. People who do not speak Hebrew can take a course in it at an immigration center on their arrival in the country.

As one would expect with so many people of vastly different ethnic and national origins in one small country, there have been tensions. The recent formation of a small group of "Oriental," or Eastern, Jews called the "Black Panthers" has dramatized the tension between the Eastern Jews and the so-called Ashkenazi Jews, who emigrated from Western countries. The Black Panthers charge that the best housing is saved for immigrants from Russia and Europe, while they are left in substandard housing. In the immigration centers, too, it has been observed that Western values tend to predominate and that "inefficient" Eastern values are frowned upon. While some of these complaints are undoubtedly valid, they are perhaps understandable in a country that is trying to assimilate so many different peoples rapidly.

To lessen some of these problems, the Israeli government has found it best to plan for people from the same countries to live together. New rural settlements, for example, often have Moroccan

Soviet Jews kiss the ground on their arrival in Israel, rejoicing over their "return" to the Holy Land.

immigrants living in one village and Tunisian immigrants living in another, but all villages are linked to a central town. Urban housing schemes also keep different ethnic groups together.

The immigration issue has been an important cause of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Jews have always seen Israel as a haven for Jews from all over the world and have never been willing to accept any limitation on the numbers of people who could immigrate. The Arabs, on the other hand, have felt that unlimited immigration will inevitably lead to a need for more land to settle the immigrants. The case of the Russian Jews is illustrative. The Israelis feel that all Russian Jews who feel persecuted should be allowed to come to Israel. The specter of 3 million Russian Jews coming to Israel, on the other hand, makes the Arabs very nervous, despite Israeli assurances that they have plenty of land to settle any immigrants who come.

In the tables that constitute this selection, we get an over-all picture of immigration to Israel since 1919. Where did most of the immigrants come from between 1919 and 1948? Where did most of the immigrants come from between 1954 and 1956? Has the percentage of immigrants from Africa and Asia increased or decreased since 1948? Have many Israelis come from America? ❧

TABLE 1

JEWISH POPULATION OF ISRAEL BY CONTINENT OF BIRTH, 1948–60

	Israeli-born		*Asia*		*Africa*		*Europe and America*		*Total*	
Year	*Number*	*Per Cent*	*Number*	*Per Cent*	*Number*	*Per Cent*	*Number*	*Per Cent*	*Number*	*Per Cent*
1948	253,661	35.4	57,768	8.1	12,236	1.7	393,013	54.8	716,678	100.0
1949	279,173	27.5	132,493	13.1	56,159	5.5	564,046	53.9	1,013,871	100.0
1950	311,100	25.8	188,578	15.7	80,542	6.7	622,773	51.8	1,202,993	100.0
1951	353,220	25.2	289,565	20.6	98,576	7.0	663,031	47.2	1,404,392	100.0
1952	393,873	27.1	292,603	20.2	106,965	7.4	656,776	45.3	1,450,217	100.0
1953	433,298	29.2	292,017	19.7	109,725	7.4	648,601	43.7	1,483,641	100.0
1954	470,811	30.9	292,860	19.2	121,033	7.9	641,305	42.0	1,526,000	100.0
1955	509,979	32.1	292,349	18.4	152,859	9.6	635,332	39.9	1,590,519	100.0
1956	548,273	32.9	293,474	17.6	196,207	11.8	629,501	37.7	1,667,455	100.0
1957	588,191	33.4	296,923	16.8	218,920	12.4	658,707	37.4	1,762,741	100.0
1958	625,969	34.6	302,372	16.7	220,980	12.2	660,827	36.5	1,810,148	100.0
1959	666,466	35.9	303,736	16.3	224,058	12.1	664,581	35.7	1,858,841	100.0
1960	708,140	37.1	303,480	15.9	228,141	11.9	671,428	35.1	1,911,189	100.0

SOURCE: *Statistical Abstract of Israel* (Jerusalem, 1961), p. 43.

TABLE 2

JEWISH IMMIGRANTS TO ISRAEL BY CONTINENT OF BIRTH, 1919–60

	Absolute Numbers					*Percentage*				
Period	*Total Number*	*Asia*	*Africa*	*Europe*	*America and Oceania*	*Per Cent*	*Asia*	*Africa*	*Europe*	*America and Oceania*
1919–5/14/1948	452,158	40,776	4,033	377,487	7,579	100.0	9.5	9.0	87.8	1.8
5/15/1948–12/31/1960	968,748	507,074		442,248		100.0	53.4		46.6	
5/15/1948–12/31/1948	101,819	4,739	8,192	76,554	478	100.0	5.3	9.1	85.1	0.5
1949	239,076	71,624	39,156	121,753	1,344	100.0	30.6	16.7	52.1	0.6
1950	169,405	57,771	25,525	83,632	1,006	100.0	34.4	15.2	49.8	0.6
1951	173,901	103,326	20,123	49,533	671	100.0	59.5	11.6	28.5	0.4
1952	23,375	6,701	10,024	6,131	516	100.0	28.7	42.9	26.2	2.2
1953	10,347	2,871	4,889	2,025	549	100.0	27.8	47.3	19.6	5.3
1954	17,471	3,305	12,188	1,325	641	100.0	18.9	69.8	7.6	3.7
1955	36,303	1,323	32,143	1,942	620	100.0	3.6	89.3	5.4	1.7
1956	54,925	2,739	44,878	6,674	631	100.0	5.0	81.7	12.2	1.1
1957	69,733	5,249	24,112	38,889	874	100.0	7.6	34.9	56.2	1.3
1958	25,919	7,597	3,893	13,626	802	100.0	29.3	15.0	52.6	3.1
1959	22,987	7,635		15,348		100.0	33.2		66.8	
1960	23,487	6,801		16,684		100.0	29.0		71.0	

SOURCE: *Statistical Abstract of Israel* (Jerusalem, 1961), p. 86.

Life in the Cities

◆*Editor's Introduction:* When an American thinks of Israel, he often thinks of the effective Israeli military or of the hard-working Israeli kibbutzniks out in the fields. And indeed the ideal of the kibbutzniks conquering the land is very much a part of the Israeli self-image. But modern Israel is a highly urbanized, industrialized society; only 4 per cent of the Israelis actually live on kibbutzim. From the beginning Israel has had large numbers of well-educated, technologically competent immigrants from the West and excellent financial support from Jewish communities in America and other parts of the world. It thus has been able to develop quickly. As an industrialized society, Israel is almost entirely self-sufficient; its factories produce everything from refrigerators to airplanes. Israel's per capita income in 1971 was over $1,800 per year, compared with Italy's $2,000. It is thus closer in this respect to a European country than to a typical Middle Eastern one.

What is life in Israeli cities like? In the following selection an Israeli author discusses the psychological intensity of Israeli city life and the importance of mass communication to the sense of unity among the people. What advantages do you see in living so close together? Why would such a sense of togetherness be useful in a wartime situation? What are some potential disadvantages of such closeness?◆

INTENSITY OF EXPERIENCE is . . . heightened in Israel by the closeness of everything. . . .

Distances are short. Much of the country is uninhabited desert land; it is thus even smaller than it appears on most

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maps, where it is a tiny speck. From a rooftop in Tel Aviv the outskirts of Jerusalem can be seen with the naked eye; Haifa is only an hour's train ride from Tel Aviv. Within this small triangle, close to 80 percent of the population is concentrated in tight, human clusters. Israel is a highly urbanized society, yet it is extremely difficult for individuals to achieve . . . anonymity. . . . Insulation is rare; most Israelis live almost painfully close to each other, in small flats, with little privacy. As in other Mediterranean countries, much of the drama and comedy of daily life happen out of doors in full view and hearing of all. Seven or eight months of the year, people leave their hot, badly insulated living rooms to eat and play on the balconies that attach to all flats as a matter of course. Most Israelis live in small, cooperatively owned apartment houses that are managed (or mismanaged) by tenant committees, or by all of the tenants together. The system, characteristically Israeli, nurtures a degree of neighborliness infinitely more intense than that found in other urban societies. . . .

Another characteristically Israeli institution is the neighborhood unit of near-identical cooperatively owned apartments, the *shikun*. A product of mass immigration and bureaucratic convenience, it is likely to remain a central feature of Israeli housing for at least another generation. The *shikun* is a planned housing development. It is often built as a housing estate for people who already know each other well: for specific ethnic groups, members of a single profession, or even of a single political party. There are *shikunim* for Zionist veterans, immigrants from Poland, from Iraq, or from the United States, for teachers, needleworkers, journalists, and, of course, for demobilized soldiers. . . .

A large part of the Israeli population still lives almost tribally within the confines of a particular ethnic group, or mother tongue. But because Israel is so small and its manners [are] so informal, it is still easier than it would be in bigger, older, or more stratified countries to know "practically everybody," from the Prime Minister to the latest boxing champion. There is, at least, a strong feeling that one knows. Chaim Topol, the young actor, expressed it in a remark in 1969 to the American magazine *Vogue:* "I know *everyone* of my age in Israel."

This is especially true in the case of *kibbutzniks*, of veteran settlers and their descendants. Insofar as morale is concerned, veteran settlers probably still count the most. They form the political and intellectual elite; judging by the casualty rates, they also bear a highly disproportionate share of the security burden. *Kibbutzniks* are only 4 percent of the population, but 25 percent of the casualties in the 1967 war were *kibbutzniks*.

Under such circumstances, tragedy rarely remains isolated within the narrower confines of family intimacy. It quickly spreads. . . . On a hot summer afternoon, it takes but a short while for most people in the *shikun*, or on the street, to know that the redheaded boy from number 5, who was only nineteen, whose mother beats her rug on the balcony too early in the morning, whose father works as a tax collector for the city, was killed this morning by a land mine, or during an artillery barrage on the frontier.

Until the cease-fire of 1970 hardly a day . . . passed without casualties. The names of those killed are broadcast over radio and television. Pictures of the dead are regularly and prominently printed in the newspapers. This is a common procedure in most countries; but here the papers are all national, and so the tragedy is as well. Every fourth or fifth speech by the Minister of Defense or by the Army Chief of Staff is a funeral eulogy. Death in war has often been as common and as regular in Israel as death in traffic accidents. And yet, each time it strikes, it electrifies the country as though it were the first time. Each death in action draws strangers closer to one another. It is at such moments that one notices in Israel a sense of cohesion so strong it makes the country seem more like a big village than a state.

The mass media powerfully dramatize this state of affairs. Israelis are obsessive listeners to the radio news. It is almost a druglike addiction. Few try to kick the habit; even fewer succeed. . . . During a strike of newscasters a few years ago, pharmacists in Jerusalem claimed that the record quantity of headache pills were sold. . . . No people in the entire world tunes in to the news as often, as regularly, and with such fervor. Seven or eight times a day, at the sound of a news beep, most Israelis pause at whatever they are doing to hear whether there has

These young Israeli mothers are so eager for news from the front that they read while walking their babies.

been another air battle or artillery exchange across the Suez Canal or some new act of sabotage by Arab terrorists. Not infrequently names of the latest casualties are read out. ("My God, isn't that so-and-so's son?") Modern Israelis turn to their radios like their ancestors once turned to prayer. The habit of listening to the news so often goes back to World War II, when German forces under Rommel were approaching Palestine from the southwest.

Israelis are early risers. Most people are at work before half-past seven in the morning. At six and at seven, the sound of "Here is the news, read by . . ." spreads from window to terrace, echoes through courtyards and streets from one end of the country to the other. "Today, in the early hours of the morning, a land mine . . . the Minister of Foreign Affairs last night warned that if Egyptian artillery guns . . . the body of corporal . . ."

The habit of following the news so often and so closely partly explains the sudden shifts in the public mood, which can be as sharp as they are frequent. Israelis easily fall from heights of exhilaration to dark abysses of gloom. . . . One day seven Syrian MIG fighter planes are shot down by two Israeli Mirages. Next day an Israeli airliner is blown up at a foreign airport.

Israeli buses are often equipped with radio sets. Theoretically they must be turned off at the request of a single passenger, but such requests are rare, and not always effective. The loudspeaker, attached above the luggage racks, emits mostly pop music, lost in the general commotion. But every hour on the hour comes the NEWS. It blares out over the noise of traffic, and the entire bus falls silent. There is an eeriness in scenes like this that is characteristically Israeli. The entire country turns, for a few moments, into an intricate system of exposed and interlocking nerves; at such moments it resembles a huge village square teeming with humanity, exhilarated or worried. In restaurants, too, in sidewalk cafés, offices, workshops, [grocery stores] (even in some elevators serviced by Muzak), the news is switched on a couple of times each day. Men, off to temporary reserve duty with the army, would sooner leave a bottle of brandy behind than part with their handy, Japanese-made transistors. They carry the news with them, even as they make it, wherever they go. It has been estimated that seven out of ten combat soldiers during the 1967 war carried transistors to the front and switched them on as often as possible. At dinner parties or late evening get-togethers, food and conversation are frequently interrupted by "Hold it, the news is on," or by an irritated "Dammit, we just missed it." More moderate addicts, professing ignorance over this or that latest event, are frequently met with incredulity, admonition, or the somewhat contemptuous cry of *"Ma? Lo shamata chadashot?"* (What? You haven't heard the news?). It is one of the basic stock phrases of everyday conversation. Another is *"Ma nishma?"* (What's happening?), which has become as much an informal greeting as "hello" or "nice to see you."

The Name

Editor's Introduction: Almost every writer on modern Israeli culture discusses the generation gap between the early pioneer immigrants to Israel and the *sabras*, their children and grandchildren born in Israel. The different *aliyas* to Israel from the 1880's to the present have brought people of widely different cultural backgrounds. For the *sabras*, the native-born Israelis, however, the "new" society is the only one they know, and it is therefore not the miracle for them that it was and is for their parents and grandparents.

The gulf in perspective due to differences in birthplace is exacerbated by the extremely rapid rate of economic, political, and cultural change in Israel. The third-generation *sabra* not only sees the world from a different viewpoint than his grandparents' but takes material well-being for granted. He is born into a reality his parents and grandparents could only dream of and is himself the "new man" they were trying to create. He therefore cannot become nostalgic about the old values and the spirit of a different time or place.

Amos Elon discusses the generation gap in political terms in *The Israelis: Founders and Sons*, the book excerpted in the previous selection. He senses a new pragmatism in Israel, a distaste for abstractions like "Zionism." He points out that whether or not Zionism is an answer to the problems of the Jews in Europe is not an issue for the *sabras*; Israel exists, and they must get along in the present environment.

Aharon Meged, "The Name," adapted by permission of Schocken Books Inc. from *Israeli Stories*, edited by Joel Blocker. Copyright © 1962 by Schocken Books Inc.

In the short story that follows, an Israeli writer offers a moving account of the generation gap in everyday terms and of its symbolic relationship to the question of how the past history of the Jews will influence the personality of generations to come in Israel. Why does Grandfather Zisskind want to name the child "Mendele"? Why do Raya and Yehuda want to give the child another name? What happens to Grandfather Zisskind after the child is named?

◆

GRANDFATHER ZISSKIND LIVED in a little house in a southern suburb of the town. About once a month, on a Saturday afternoon, his granddaughter Raya and her young husband, Yehuda, would go and pay him a visit.

Raya would give three cautious knocks on the door. . . . Another moment, and the key would be turned and the door opened.

After Raya and Yehuda had sat down at the table, which was covered with a white cloth showing signs of the meal he had eaten alone—crumbs from the Sabbath loaf . . .—he would smooth the crumpled pillows, spread a cover over the narrow bed and tidy up. It was a small room. . . . An ancient walnut cupboard with an empty buffet stood exactly opposite the door. On the wall hung a clock which had long since stopped.

"We ought to make Grandfather a present of a clock," Raya would say to Yehuda as she surveyed the room and her glance lighted on the clock; but every time the matter slipped her memory. She loved her grandfather, with his pointed white silky beard. . . . Rachel would come to him once or twice a week, bringing with her a bag full of provisions, to clean the room and cook some meals for him. . . .

"And now . . . what can I offer you?" Grandfather Zisskind would ask when he considered the room ready to receive guests. "There's no need to offer us anything, Grandfather; we didn't come for that," Raya would answer crossly.

But protests were of no avail. Her grandfather would take out a jar of fermenting preserves and put it on the table, then grapes and plums, biscuits and two glasses of strong tea, forcing them to eat. . . .

Afterward Grandfather would ask about all kinds of things. Raya did her best to make the conversation pleasant, in order to relieve Yehuda's boredom. Finally would come what Yehuda dreaded most of all and on account of which he had resolved more than once to refrain from these visits. Grandfather Zisskind would rise, take his chair and place it next to the wall, get up on it carefully, holding on to the back so as not to fall, open the clock and take out a cloth bag with a black cord tied round it. Then he would shut the clock, . . . undo the cord, take out of the cloth wrapping a bundle of sheets of paper, lay them in front of Yehuda, and say:

"I would like you to read this."

"Grandfather," Raya would rush to Yehuda's rescue, "but he's already read it at least ten times. . . ."

But Grandfather Zisskind would pretend not to hear and would not reply, so Yehuda was compelled each time to read there and then that same essay. . . . It was a lament for Grandfather's native town in the Ukraine, which had been destroyed by the Germans, and all its Jews slaughtered. When he had finished, Grandfather would take the sheets out of his hand, fold them, sigh, and say:

"And nothing of all this is left. Dust and ashes. Not even a tombstone to bear witness. Imagine, of a community of twenty thousand Jews not even one survived to tell how it happened. . . . Not a trace."

Then out of the same cloth bag, which contained various letters and envelopes, he would draw a photograph of his grandson Mendele, who had been twelve years old when he was killed; the only son of his son Ossip, chief engineer in a large chemical factory. He would show it to Yehuda and say:

"He was a genius. Just imagine, when he was only eleven he had already finished his studies at the Conservatory, won a scholarship from the Government and was considered an outstanding violinist. A genius! Look at that forehead. . . ." And after he had put the photograph back he would sigh and repeat, "Not a trace."

A strained silence of commiseration would descend on Raya and Yehuda, who had already heard these same things many times over and no longer felt anything when they were repeated. And as he wound the cord round the bag the old man would muse. . . . He had a warm heart, Ossip had. He didn't mix in politics, he wasn't even a Zionist, but even when they promoted him there he didn't forget that he was a Jew. . . . He called his son Mendele, of all names, after his dead brother, even though it was surely not easy to have a name like that among the Russians. . . . Yes, he had a warm Jewish heart. . . ."

He would turn to Yehuda as he spoke. . . . He regarded Yehuda as an educated man who could understand someone else, especially inasmuch as Yehuda held a government job.

Raya remembered how the change had come about in her grandfather. When [World War II] was over he was still sustained by uncertainty and hoped for some news of his son. . . . Then Raya came home one evening and saw him sitting on the floor with a rent in his jacket. In the house they spoke in whispers, and her mother's eyes were red with weeping. She, too, had wept at Grandfather's sorrow, at the sight of his stricken face, at the oppressive quiet in the rooms. For many weeks afterward it was as if he had imposed silence on himself. He would sit at his table from morning to night, reading and rereading old letters, studying family photographs by the hour. . . . He was no longer the same talkative, wise, and humorous grandfather. . . . Now he seemed to cut himself off from the world and entrench himself in his thoughts and his memories, which none of the household could penetrate. . . .

When Raya's father died, Grandfather Zisskind did not even console his daughter. But when the days of mourning were past it was as if he had been restored to new life, and he emerged from his silence. Yet he did not speak of his son-in-law, nor of his son Ossip, but only of his grandson Mendele. Often during the day he would mention the boy by name as if he were alive, and speak of him familiarly, although he had seen him only in photographs. . . . There was no logic in what he said; this would so infuriate Rachel that she would burst out with "Oh, do stop! Stop it! I'll go out of my mind with your foolish nonsense!" She would rise from her seat in anger, withdraw to her room, and afterward, when she had calmed down, would say to Raya, ". . . loss of memory. He no longer knows what he's talking about."

One day—Raya would never forget this—she and her mother saw that Grandfather was wearing his best suit, the black one, and under it a gleaming white shirt; his shoes were polished, and he had a hat on. He had not worn these clothes for many months, and the family was dismayed to see him. They thought that he had lost his mind. "What holiday is it today?" her mother asked. "Really, don't you know?" asked her grandfather. "Today is Mendele's birthday!" Her mother burst out crying. She, too, began to cry and ran out of the house.

After that Grandfather Zisskind went to live alone. . . . Raya would go and visit him, at first with her mother and, after her marriage, with Yehuda. What bothered them was that they were compelled to listen to his talk about Mendele, his grandson, and to read that same lament for his native town, which had been destroyed.

Whenever Rachel happened to come there during their visit, she would scold Grandfather rudely. "Stop bothering them with your masterpiece," she would say, and herself remove the papers from the table and put them back in their bag. "If you want them to keep on visiting you, don't talk to them about the dead. Talk about the living. They're young people and they have no mind for such things." . . .

When Raya was seven months pregnant, Grandfather Zisskind had in his absent-mindedness not yet noticed it. But Rachel could no longer refrain from letting him share her joy and hope, and told him that a great-grandchild would soon be born to him. One evening the door of Raya and Yehuda's flat opened, and Grandfather himself stood on the threshold in his holiday clothes, just as on the day of Mendele's birthday. This was the first time he had visited them at home, and Raya was so surprised that she hugged and kissed him as she had not done since she was a child. His face shone, his eyes sparkled with the same intelligent and mischievous light they had in those far-off days before the calamity. . . . For the first time in many months he did not mention Mendele.

"Ah, you naughty children," he said, "is this how you treat Grandfather? Why didn't you tell me you had such a nice place?"

"How many times have I invited you here, Grandfather?" asked Raya.

"Invited me? You ought to have *brought* me here, dragged me by force!"

"I wanted to do that too, but you refused." . . .

Some days later, when Rachel came to their home and they told her about Grandfather's amazing visit, she was not surprised:

"Ah, you don't know what he's been contemplating during all these days, ever since I told him that you're about to have a child. . . . He has one wish—that if it's a son, it should be named . . . after his grandson."

"Mendele?" exclaimed Raya, and involuntarily burst into laughter. Yehuda smiled as one smiles at the fond fancies of the old.

"Of course, I told him to put that out of his head," said Rachel, "but you know how obstinate he is. It's some obsession and he won't think of giving it up." . . .

Yehuda shrugged his shoulders. "Crazy. The child would be unhappy all his life."

"But he's not capable of understanding that," said Rachel, and a note of apprehension crept into her voice.

Raya's face grew solemn. "We have already decided on the name," she said. "If it's a girl she'll be called Osnath, and if it's a boy—Ehud."

Rachel did not like either. . . .

Rachel, midway between the generations, was of two minds about the matter. When she spoke to her father she would scold and contradict him, flinging at him all the arguments she had heard from Raya and Yehuda as though they were her own, but when she spoke to the children she sought to induce them to meet his wishes, and would bring down their anger on herself. . . .

"Actually, what's so bad about the name Mendele?" she asked her daughter. "It's a Jewish name like any other."

"What are you talking about, Mother"—Raya rebelled against the thought—"a Ghetto name, ugly, horrible! I wouldn't even be capable of letting it cross my lips. Do you want me to hate my child?" . . .

"You have to do it for Grandfather's sake," Rachel said quietly, although she knew that she was not speaking the whole truth.

"You know, Mother, that I am ready to do anything for Grandfather," said Raya. "I love him, but I am not ready to sacrifice my child's happiness on account of some superstition of his. What sense is there in it?"

Rachel could not explain the "sense in it" rationally, but in her heart she rebelled against her daughter's logic, which had always been hers too and now seemed very superficial, a symptom of the frivolity afflicting the younger generation. Her old father now appeared to her like an ancient tree whose deep roots suck up the mysterious essence of existence, of which neither her daughter nor she herself knew anything. . . . At night she would wake up covered in cold sweat. Hazily, she recalled frightful scenes of bodies of naked children, beaten and trampled under the jackboots of soldiers. . . .

Then Rachel came with a proposal for a compromise: that the child should be named Menachem. A Hebrew name, she said; an Israeli one, by all standards. Many children bore it, and it occurred to nobody to make fun of them. Even Grandfather had agreed to it after much urging.

Raya refused to listen.

"We have chosen a name, Mother," she said, "which we both like, and we won't change it for another. Menachem is a name which reeks of old age, a name which for me is connected with sad memories and people I don't like. Menachem you could call only a boy who is short, weak, and not good-looking. Let's not talk about it any more, Mother."

Rachel was silent. . . . At last she said:

"And are you ready to take the responsibility of going against Grandfather's wishes?"

Raya's eyes opened wide, and fear was reflected in them:

"Why do you make such a fateful thing of it? You frighten me!" she said, and burst into tears. . . .

"I don't know . . ." [Rachel] said. "Perhaps all the same we are bound to retain the names of the dead . . . in order to leave a remembrance of them. . . ."

"But I don't always want to remember all those dreadful things, Mother. It's impossible that this memory should always hang about this house and that the poor child should bear it!"

Rachel understood. . . . As if to herself, she said in a whisper:

"I don't know . . . at times it seems to me that it's not Grandfather who's suffering from loss of memory, but ourselves. All of us."

About two weeks before the birth was due, Grandfather Zisskind appeared in Raya and Yehuda's home for the second time. His face was yellow, angry, and the light had faded from his eyes. . . . Turning to Yehuda he said, " I wish to speak to you."

They went into the inner room. Grandfather sat down on the chair and placed the palm of his hand on the edge of the table, as was his wont, and Yehuda sat, lower than he, on the bed.

"Rachel has told me that you don't want to call the child by my grandchild's name," he said.

"Yes . . ." said Yehuda diffidently.

"Perhaps you'll explain to me why?" he asked.

"We . . ." stammered Yehuda, who found it difficult to face the piercing gaze of the old man. "The name simply doesn't appeal to us."

Grandfather was silent. Then he said, "I understand that Mendele doesn't appeal to you. Not a Hebrew name. Granted! But Menachem—what's wrong with Menachem?" It was obvious that he was controlling his feelings with difficulty.

"It's not . . ." Yehuda knew that there was no use explaining; they were two generations apart in their idea. "It's not an Israeli name . . . it's from the *Golah* [Diaspora]."

"*Golah*," repeated Grandfather. He shook with rage, but somehow he maintained his self-control. Quietly he added, "We all come from the *Golah*. I, and Raya's father and mother. Your father and mother. All of us."

"Yes . . ." said Yehuda. He resented the fact that he was being dragged into an argument which was distasteful to him, particularly with this old man whose mind was already not quite clear. . . . "Yes, but we were born in this country," he said aloud; "that's different."

Grandfather Zisskind looked at him contemptuously. . . .

"You . . . think . . . that everything that was there is past and gone. That you are starting everything anew."

"I didn't say that. I only said that we were born in this country. . . ."

"You were born here. Very nice . . ." said Grandfather Zisskind with rising emotion. "So what of it? What's so remarkable about that? In what way are you superior to those who were born *there?* Are you cleverer than they? More cultured? . . . Is your blood redder than theirs?" Grandfather Zisskind looked as if he could wring Yehuda's neck.

"I didn't say that either. I said that *here* it's different. . . ."

Grandfather Zisskind's patience with idle words was exhausted.

"You good-for-nothing!" he burst out in his rage. "What do you know about what was there? What do you know of the *people* that were there? The communities? The cities? What do you know of the *life* they had there?"

"Yes," said Yehuda, his spirit crushed, "but we no longer have any ties with it."

"You have no ties with it?" Grandfather Zisskind bent toward him. His lips quivered in fury. "With what . . . with what *do* you have ties?"

"We have . . . with this country," said Yehuda and gave an involuntary smile.

"Fool!" Grandfather Zisskind shot at him. "Do you think that people come to a desert and make themselves a nation, eh? That you are the first of some new race? That you're not the son of your father? Not the grandson of your grandfather? Do you want to forget them? . . . Why . . . why, everything here"—he included everything around him in the sweep of his arm—"is no more than a puddle of tapwater against the big sea that was there! What have you here? A mixed multitude! Seventy languages! Seventy distinct groups! Customs? A way of life? Why, every home here is a nation in itself, with its own customs and its own names! And with this you have ties, you say. . . ."

Yehuda lowered his eyes and was silent.

"I'll tell you what ties are," said Grandfather Zisskind calmly. "Ties are remembrance! Do you understand? The Russian is linked to his people because he remembers his ancestors. He is called Ivan, his father was called Ivan, and his grandfather was called Ivan, back to the first generation. And no Russian has said: From today onward I shall not be called

Ivan because my fathers and my father's fathers were called that; I am the first of a new Russian nation which has nothing at all to do with the Ivans. Do you understand?"

"But what has that got to do with it?" Yehuda protested impatiently. Grandfather Zisskind shook his head at him.

"And you—you're ashamed to give your son the name Mendele lest it remind you that there were Jews who were called by that name. . . .

"O children, children, you don't know what you're doing. . . . You're finishing off the work which the enemies of Israel began. They took the bodies away from the world, and you—the name and the memory. . . ."

And with that he rose, took his stick, and with long strides went toward the door and left.

The newborn child was a boy, and he was named Ehud, and when he was about a month old, Raya and Yehuda took him in the carriage to Grandfather's house.

Raya gave three cautious knocks on the door. . . . Since the birth of the child Grandfather had not visited them even once. . . .

The door opened, and on the threshold stood Grandfather Zisskind, his face weary and wrinkled. He seemed to have aged. . . .

"Good Sabbath, Grandfather," said Raya with great feeling. It seemed to her now that she loved him more than ever.

Grandfather looked at them as if surprised, and then said absently, "Come in, come in."

"We've brought the baby with us!" said Raya. . . .

"Come in, come in," repeated Grandfather Zisskind in a tired voice. . . .

Yehuda stood the carriage by the wall and whispered to Raya, "It's stifling for him here." Raya opened the window wide.

"You haven't seen our baby yet, Grandfather!" she said with a sad smile.

"Sit down, sit down," said Grandfather, shuffling over to the shelf, from which he took the jar of preserves and the biscuit tin, putting them on the table.

"There's no need, Grandfather, really there's no need for it. We didn't come for that," said Raya.

"Only a little something. I have nothing to offer you today. . . ." said Grandfather in a dull broken voice. He took the kettle off the kerosene burner and poured out two glasses of tea, which he placed before them. Then he, too, sat down, said "Drink, drink," and softly tapped his fingers on the table. . . .

"And you—what are you doing now?" he asked Yehuda.

"Working as usual," said Yehuda, and added with a laugh, "I play with the baby when there's time." . . .

There was a deep silence. It seemed to last a very long time. Grandfather Zisskind's fingers gave little quivers on the white tablecloth. It was hot in the room, and the buzzing of a fly could be heard.

Suddenly the baby burst out crying, and Raya started from her seat and hastened to quiet him. She rocked the carriage and crooned, "Quiet, child, quiet, quiet. . . ."

Grandfather Zisskind raised his head and said to Yehuda in a whisper:

"You think it was impossible to save him . . . it was possible. They had many friends. Ossip himself wrote to me about it. . . . The whole town knew them and loved them. . . . How is it they didn't think of it . . . ?" he said, touching his forehead with the palm of his hand. "After all, they knew that the Germans were approaching. . . . It was still possible to do something. . . ." He suddenly opened eyes filled with terror. "Wild beasts! To take little children and put them into wagons and deport them. . . ."

Again there was a prolonged silence, and as it grew heavier Raya felt the oppressive weight on her bosom increasing till it could no longer be contained. . . . It was as if a chasm gaped between a world which was passing and a world that was born. . . . The aged father did not recognize the great-grandchild whose life would be no memorial.

Grandfather Zisskind got up, took his chair, and pulled it up to the clock. He climbed onto it to take out his documents.

Raya could no longer stand the oppressive atmosphere.

"Let's go," she said to Yehuda in a choked voice.

"Yes, we must go," said Yehuda, and rose from his seat. "We have to go," he said loudly as he turned to the old man.

Grandfather Zisskind held the key of the clock for a moment more, then he let his hand fall, grasped the back of the chair, and got down.

"You have to go. . . ." he said with a tortured grimace. He spread his arms out helplessly and accompanied them to the doorway.

When the door had closed behind them the tears flowed from Raya's eyes. She bent over the carriage and pressed her lips to the baby's chest. At that moment it seemed to her that he was in need of pity and of great love, as though he were alone, an orphan in the world.